
**WHITE FARMERS,
SOCIAL INSTITUTIONS
AND SETTLER MASCULINITY
IN THE NATAL MIDLANDS,
1880-1920**

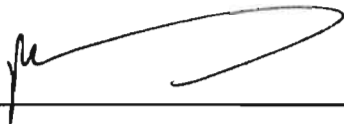
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A Thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
in the Department of Economic History,
University of Natal, Durban

March 1996

DECLARATION

I, Robert Graham Morrell, declare that this thesis is my own work.
It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination
in any other university.



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'RGM', is written over a horizontal line.

Durban, 7th day of August 1996

ABSTRACT

The midlands was the first area occupied and farmed by white settlers. It became the agricultural heartland of colonial Natal. Its farmers became politically and economically powerful. Their success rested on the construction of a community. They formed a close-knit society in which family links and a sense of belonging were constantly reinforced.

The community was closed to blacks. A keen sense of class was developed which made it difficult for outsiders to gain admission. In order to become a member, new immigrants could enroll in some of the many social institutions which were created. It was these institutions which served to integrate the community, to order and police it, and to define it.

The community was composed of people who all owned land. A sense of belonging to this community was achieved in a number of ways. Families were nurtured, becoming exceptionally important as institutions through which wealth was passed. They were places of social interaction as well as transgenerational units which ensured a continuous presence in the area. Amongst the institutions which the settlers founded were schools, societies, volunteer regiments, agricultural organisations and sports clubs. The institutions were consciously modelled on their metropolitan counterparts.

Settler masculinity was nurtured in the institutions. It prescribed male behaviour according to the values of a land-owning settler gentry. This masculinity was disseminated throughout the colony, becoming a key feature of the colonial gender order. A strong emphasis was placed on being tough and fit, on obedience and teamwork. These were values which gave sport major popularity within the colony and which fueled a militarism that had a bloody and brutal climax in the 1906 rebellion.

The institutions gave men power and served as networks by which white male prestige and influence was sustained. Although women were formally excluded, they occupied a central position within the family and made a major contribution to the reproduction of the community.

White boys and men found the demands of settler masculinity exacting. Nevertheless, apart from providing them with powerful places in the colonial order, its emphasis on male companionship and fit bodies produced a powerful camaraderie. On the other hand, it stigmatised men who did not fit the mould, enforcing conformity as it did so.

Settler society was able to renew and reproduce itself largely through its own institutions, outside the sphere of the state. The expansion of the state in the twentieth century threatened settler institutions though they were successfully defended.

The midland community and its families were not as homogenous as they liked to pretend. They maintained a facade by excluding and silencing dissidents. This process was a necessary part of the creation of a myth which elevated old Natal families to positions of social status and prestige.

Acknowledgements

Many histories today are written 'for' some group or other. I cannot say, however, that I have written this study for any group or minority, or for any cause, other than the personal ones I set out in the preface, and the intellectual ones I lay down in the introduction. This study is not an attempt to resurrect the memory of the forgotten or to ennoble the slighted. Nevertheless, this study has a constituency, white settler-farmers, of which I am mindful. More than anything else, this study has depended on the generosity and openness of my informants (who are listed in the bibliography). I would like to record my thanks and admiration to them. I doubt whether they will like everything they read in this study, but by the same token, I hope they do not find it all critical and unsympathetic. My intention has been to present their world, a world that is past, as honestly as possible. This has meant being critical, but it has also drawn my empathy. No historian can find the treasures of archives and libraries without the help of the librarians. I wish to thank the many librarians who assisted me, often when I was in a hurry, sometimes when I was in a disagreeable mood! I would like specifically to record my thanks to: the staff of the Killie Campbell Library, especially Bobby Eldridge, Stacey Gibson and Penny Brown; John Morrison of the Natal Society Library, Heather Green of the University of Natal's Law Library, the staff of the Natal Archive Depot, especially Verne Harris; the staff of the Cape Town Public Library, the Cape Town Archive, the Local History Museum of Durban, the Don Africana Library (especially Brian Spencer), the Central Archive and South African Defence Force Archive in Pretoria, Maureen Holland of the Howick Library, Herman van Wyk of the Victoria Club library, Elaine Dodson (archivist of Hilton College and Michaelhouse), Ronald Brookes of Michaelhouse, Mark Coughlan, Natal Carbineers Archive and Bryan Spencer of Durban's Don Africana library.

I have many other people to thank, some are colleagues who have expressed an interest in my work, others are people I had never met before, who generously gave me the benefit of their local knowledge. I apologize if I have omitted somebody, as I am bound to have done - the road has been a long one. In the former category, I thank: Helen Bradford, Cathy Campbell, Ben Carton, Roger Deacon, Graham Dominy, Carolyn Hamilton, Doug Hindson, David Lincoln, Vivien McMenamin, Linzi Manicom, Tim Quinlan and Jenny Robinson. I record my appreciation to fellow academics who pointed me towards unknown references or helped with unfamiliar sources: Shirley Brookes, Mike Lyne, Professor M Olmesdahl, Ian Phimister and Pip Stigger.

To the many historians of the midlands I am most grateful. The following people shared with me their accumulated labours, their knowledge and their resources selflessly: Pam Arnold, Tony Barratt, Michael Johnson, Robert King, Drummond and Brigid Mackenzie, Marie-Ann Mingay, Skonk Nicholson, Barbara Pennefather, Cyril and Jane Pennefather, Phyllis Reed, Philip Romeyn, Nan Slade, John Slatter (now sadly deceased), Shelagh Spencer, Moira Tarr and Gill Tatham.

Family and friends have been especially important to me in the eight years it has taken to complete this thesis. My mother and father have always encouraged me. My twin brother, Christopher, has spurred me on by his successes and my dear sister, Penny, has given me consistent and sustained support. It is hard to imagine having completed this without her. To June Farrer, my 'aunt' in Pietermaritzburg, I say thank you for giving me rare insights, a giggle and a bed when I needed one. To Wendy Swan, another 'aunt', I belatedly record my gratitude - she died at the end of 1995. To my daughters, Tamarin and Ashleigh, I send my love.

There have been so many people in this time who have given to me of their friendship, support and time unstintingly that I cannot possibly mention them all here. I must single out, however, my close friends. Vishnu Padayachee accompanied me to the archives in the early years and remained a loyal support thereafter. Geoff Schreiner became like a brother to me, sharing the ups and downs that go with a long project such as this. Mike Morris has been a loyal friend, capable of coming up with stunning insights at short notice. Alan Rycroft has steadied me on many an occasion, giving me wise words and warmth. Bob Connell gave me the benefit of his knowledge and a glimpse of hope as he initiated me into the theoretical world of men's studies. Georgina Hamilton shared her life and her love with me. Dave Johnson has reminded me of late, that life is about fun, as well as anguish.

Most of all, I have to thank my supervisor, Bill Freund. He has been a colleague, and for many years, a mentor. But much more, he has been a friend. Together with the trusty Monday touch rugby crowd he has been a tonic when the energies have flagged. For his insights, encouragement, humour and companionship, I owe him a great deal.

The handsome appearance of this thesis is entirely the work of Rob Evans and I thank him for his labours. I could not have completed this research without financial assistance. I here formally acknowledge and thank the HSRC and the University of Natal for their support.

CONTENTS

Preface	
Chapter 1	Introduction 1
Chapter 2	The Settlers of the Midlands and the Political Economy of Natal 27
Chapter 3	Masculinity, Friendship and the Boy's Secondary Boarding Schools 47
Chapter 4	Rugby: Schools, Clubs and Personalities 69
Chapter 5	Clubs, Societies and Secret Orders 91
Chapter 6	Volunteer Regiments, Military Men and Militarism 119
Chapter 7	Agricultural Societies, Farmer Associations and the creation of a 'farming community' 145
Chapter 8	Family, Women and Inheritance 173
Chapter 9	The Forgotten and the Excluded - The Secret History of the ONFs 203
Chapter 10	Conclusion 213
Bibliography 219
Maps 260

Preface - a personal note

Growing up in the 'ruling class' is often thought of as being unproblematic, as a silver spoon experience. I do not consider my own social origins as being 'ruling class', though some might disagree. They might cite the fact that I went to private schools and university, had a professional (a dentist) for a father, and a successful businessman and mayor-elect of Cape Town as one grandfather and senior colonial official (resident commissioner of Bechuanaland and Basutoland) as the other, as evidence of 'ruling class' origin. Whatever the arguments about my class position, I can say that it did not bestow any special happiness upon me. A poem by Patrick Cullinan called "Sir Tom" captures some of my own feelings about what growing up in the ruling class could mean. Cullinan was a grandson of Sir Thomas Cullinan, whose name was given to the largest gem diamond ever found.¹

.... I was his favourite,
so my parents said, and when we went to luncheon
once a month on Sunday, they'd place me on a high stool
next to 'Father'. He'd say the grace, then punch upon
the table, shout 'my sweet boy' and squeeze my puny chin
with his gross hand, while all around us aunts
and uncles kept on smiling: awkward, docile, prim ...
.... the old man said, 'Open
wide!' I made my lips into an O, smiling to the giver.

Eyes shut, I turned towards grandfather,
trusting. Into my throat he jabbed a long coarse sliver
from the crust. It rasped and burnt my skin. I gagged
in panic and could not scream while still he stabbed and bent
it down my throat. Some uncle (or my father, was it?)
pulled him gently off

.... At the table old Sir Tom
stared at his family. Rightly, they had always known
children never should presume or, if they did, learn that from
such babies must come men. But strangely, now, the old man broke,
gasping into tears

(Cullinan, 1994, 114-5).

This thesis is not about me and my family. Yet it could not have been written without full and frequent reference to my historically constructed self and my ancestors. It is trite, but I need to say that this thesis is shaped by my own history. Of course, all pieces of work bear the distinctive and unique mark of the author - his/her past, predilections, dispositions. It is not conventional to intrude these into academic writing on the basis that academic research should strive to be scientific and objective. While this positivist, Rankelian notion has long been discredited, historians continue for the most part carefully to sweep away as much of themselves from the text as possible.²

1 Cullinan opened the Premier mine in 1902 and in 1905 the largest flawless diamond of 3106 carats was found in the mine and named after him. The Transvaal government presented it to Edward VII. It was cut up into 9 large and over 100 smaller diamonds and included in the royal crown and sceptre.

2 An exception is Anthony Giddens who recently drew attention to this phenomenon: "Modern societies have a covert emotional history, yet to be fully drawn into the open" (Giddens, 1992, 2).

For two reasons I shall break, at least in this preface, with this convention. Theoretically, there is a huge corpus of work which calls us to acknowledge our selves, our emotions, our histories in the art of writing. One of the many authors who follows this line is Julia Kristeva, the French feminist psychoanalyst. In a much discussed work, Kristeva (1986) attempted, in the context of debates on women's oppression, to identify a voice from within, a pre-verbal voice of sensation and feeling which would be a 'true' voice, a voice outside the domination of phallogocentric language. This is not the place to enter the debate about the validity of this exercise, and here I wish merely to pick up from this rich and complex text, the assertion that human existence cannot only be understood in structural terms, or in philosophical terms or, in the case of history, according to the august methodological cannon sanctified by the academy. For some time, history has been searching for lost voices - those of the workers, the peasants, the children, and most recently the subaltern. But there is another voice which historians have been less anxious to access. That of the writer him or herself. In this preface I shall permit my own voice to sound.

The second reason for this personal preface is that my own life has been bound up with the subject matter of this thesis. My earliest memories are filled with my maternal grandparents, Aubrey and Kathleen Forsyth-Thompson. I remember them as kind and correct people, always well-turned out, my grandmother smelling mildly of lavender, my grandfather in his suit. Even in the hot South African summers he wore a tie. My great grandfather (Kathleen's father) was Herbert Murray, a Pietermaritzburg lawyer. And his father (my great, great grandfather) was Sir Thomas K Murray, Natal government minister, whose history is covered more fully later in this thesis. Aubrey's father was Ernest Thompson, a school teacher who taught in Ixopo, Mool River and Pietermaritzburg in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. My own memories then, are of people who came from the class that this thesis sets out to examine and analyse.

I have always had an historical curiosity. My great aunts (Kathleen's sisters) sparked some of that curiosity. Ella, the eldest, was a powerful woman. Married to Jack Gooding, Natal's provincial secretary, she was never short of opinion, a hive of information on Natal families and always very active. She played golf and worked tirelessly, after Jack's death, for a variety of charitable organisations. As a child I remember her as the person who taught me the child's card game, "Please and Thank You". On occasional visits to her home in Pietermaritzburg, I remember her talking of the Natal Carbineers, Delville Wood and the cross in Alexandra Park (made out of blasted timber from the battlefield which inexplicably each year wept resin on the anniversary of that bloody battle), the Natal provincial rugby team and with pride, about the newly promoted National Football League club, Maritzburg City.

My grandmother fueled that curiosity by her taciturnity. After Aubrey died in 1982 she lived with her niece in Pietermaritzburg. I visited her frequently in the years before she died (1988) and witnessed some of her long-suppressed griefs and angers slowly seep out of her. She was particularly angry about the end of colonialism. She had been in Uganda as wife of a district commissioner in the 1920s and 1930s. She lamented the fate of Uganda, blaming it all on tribal ignorance and savagery. The last time I saw her she was lying absolutely still in a bed covered with a white counterpane. Her face was drawn but her composure was as it had always been, neat, correct, concealing. I had my young daughter by the hand and we sat next to her for a while. She whispered to me, words that sounded urgent and important. But life was leaving her, and I could not make them out. My curiosity about her, her family, her world, has been stronger since that sad day.

Aubrey was a fine figure of a man. He had been a good middle distance runner at school and his body and comportment spoke of this athleticism for most of his life. His working life was spent in the colonial service. He finished his career as resident commissioner of Basutoland,

having served in the same capacity in Bechuanaland, and before that, as a district commissioner in Uganda. My admiration was at its height when I saw his mail: addressed impressively to Lieut-Col A D Forsyth-Thompson, CBE, CMG, CVO. It was most unusual for my grandfather to express any extreme emotion and I therefore rarely saw him weep. To this day I wonder what raw but deeply concealed memory brought him, unexpectedly and abruptly, to tears, one summer afternoon in Pietermaritzburg. He was sitting in an armchair listening to Chris de Burgh, a contemporary British balladeer, singing a song about the battle of Passchendale Ridge in 1917. He never spoke of his war experiences as a nineteen year old second lieutenant in the Royal Field Artillery in France.

In the research on this thesis, many memories have swirled into my consciousness, prompted by chance or a name that conjured up a moment of my past. I record them here because I believe that they say something about my relatedness to the social class I study and about that class itself.

In 1974 I finished my schooling at Hilton College, one of the schools studied in Chapter 3. I spent two miserable years at the school, bullied by my peers and made to pay the wages of difference (having arrived in Std 9, I (and my twin brother) had not undergone initiation and therefore was not considered to belong within the system). In the late 1930s my uncle had also been at Hilton. He too found the experience gruelling. The story the women in the family told of this phase of his life was of him being picked on and challenged to a fight. According to family lore, he responded by approaching his antagonist and kissing him. The story does not relate what happened after this.

At Hilton I played rugby. I liked sports and was not forced to play. I ended up playing for the lowest team in the school - the glorious sevenths. This had something to do with having played soccer for four continuous years at my previous school, but it also had a lot to do with not being considered masculine, not considered being 'one of the boys'. Misfits are not generally created unequal, they are constructed that way. While my career at Hilton was not exactly covered in sporting glory, I could take consolation from the fact that my grandfather's nephew (Patrick Forsyth-Thompson) had captained the famous unbeaten Hilton rugby team in 1938 and had been headboy. In addition, his son, Richard, and another distant cousin, Nicholas Swan, both played rugby for the first team. Moments of reflected glory like these could momentarily blow away the unpleasant realization of being bottom of the pile as one trudged out to play on a deserted, inhospitable outside field.

My memories are strongest of school and sport, but they also come into focus when familiar family names come up in conversation. The ritual of afternoon tea was invariably the occasion when my grandparents and their generation would discuss the fortunes of their vast extended family or of mutually known friends or of families considered to be important. Humour often was a part of these discussions, with politics seldom to the fore. Only at large family gatherings (such as Christmas time) did the men get into a huddle and discuss the serious matters of the day.

So I came to the subject of this thesis with a formal, genealogical connection as well as a rich store of memories. Where either of these are consciously at play, I indicate so in the text. For the rest, the reader will have to measure for him or herself where my scholarly technique ends and my historical imagination begins.

Chapter 1 Introduction

The white people of Natal, are British, and intensely patriotic. They do not regard themselves as South Africans, but as an outpost of England. As a group, they are excessively conservative. (*International Socialist Review*, June 1917, 726)

This was an outsider's view of the people with whom this thesis is concerned. His opinion, now seventy years old, is little different from the way in which Natalians, particularly the upper crust, are characterised today.

[T]he roots of England still run strong (though) they love their province like a well-worn teddy bear. Conservative fragments of colonialism have stuck with affectionate simplicity bordering on Anglo-Saxon eccentricity On a one-to-one basis they resemble nobody else in the entire country. (Clarke, 1989, 96-99)¹

There is something curious about Natalians (the farmers of the midlands especially) which, over the years, has brought forth comment and attracted the description of the colony as 'the last outpost'. This thesis attempts to explain something of this curiosity by examining the farmers of the midlands (Map 2).² The farmers were amongst the earliest white settlers in the region. Although they were few in number they had considerable political power and exercised a cultural influence over the colony as a whole.

The personal reasons for making the midland farmers my focus are set out in the preface. There are also political and intellectual reasons.

Politically, the electoral victory of the ANC in 1994 was significant for the way in which intellectuals made sense of their mission and purpose. The junior partner in the Government of National Unity was the National party, long associated with white domination and apartheid. This situation was a curious outcome of the liberation struggle which few had predicted. The new situations broke old political frames and permitted new speculations about South African society, past and present. At the political level, the 1994 election decisively destroyed the equation of white with ruling class. An intellectual implication is that a study of whites (colonists, settlers) is now possible without being seen to be taking a position of apology for social injustice.³ Further intellectual reasons for my choice of subject will become apparent in the course of this introduction.

My own intellectual development has been bound up with an interest in white farmers. In my research on the eastern Transvaal in 1980 and 1981 I became interested in the class organisation of white farmers. I sought to discover how these farmers related to and/or were

1 I have compiled this quote from her article.

2 There is no one definition of 'the midlands'. I have selected an area contained within an area where the vectors are Greytown, Estcourt, Underberg and Ixopo. Some definitions define the midlands in larger terms. The polo players, for example, include east Griqualand. For administrative or tourist reasons, some definitions include the Weenen thornveld area, or the areas east of Pietermaritzburg such as Eston. In official terms (as per the *Natal Provincial Proclamation*, 52/1991), the midlands presently include Pietermaritzburg, Ixopo, Himeville, Donnybrook, Mid Illovo, Mpendhle, Highflats, Richmond, Camperdown, Wartburg, Dalton, New Hanover, Kranakop, Moot River, and the area right up to, but not including Helpmekeer. Estcourt and Weenen are excluded (Deeds Office, Pietermaritzburg, Display Map of *Joint Service Board Areas* (Land Surveyor's Office, Pietermaritzburg).

3 Authors writing colonial history have been cautious about telling the lives of white people, fearing that it might "further an uncritical colonial nostalgia" (Strobel, 1991, viii). I have the same concerns, but believe that the timing is propitious for me to conduct a sympathetic, yet critical, examination of my subjects.

part of, the state and how they accessed the resources of the state to secure their agricultural operations. My research also included their access to land and labour and the class divisions amongst farmers (Morrell, 1983). My research interests at that time were in harmony with the broad research impulse of revisionist history which I describe below. Since that time, however, I have become increasingly aware that in considering white farmers primarily, and in some cases exclusively, as economic units or political agents, a great deal of the picture got left out. The quotations with which I began this chapter alert us to the fact that farmers have lives which cannot be fully understood within the confines of the economic and political realms. Being 'conservative' and 'colonial' are not just political or economic characteristics. Nor can they be understood simply as social personality traits. They are bound up with class and gender identity.

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The direction that my enquiry ultimately here has taken, was in large measure determined by changes in my professional location. In 1988, having begun the preliminary research on farmer organisation in the midlands, I moved from the history department of the University of Durban-Westville, to the education department of the University of Natal. There were two major consequences for this study. Firstly, I became aware of the importance of social institutions (like schools) in the creation, reproduction and maintenance of classes. Secondly, I became interested in gender issues and in the process became aware of their importance for an understanding of classes. In the following years, I reshaped my interests and this study, moving the major focus from economic and political issues to social issues. I did not abandon either my interest in class analysis nor my conviction that material forces set limits to, and provided the context of, the being and doings of class actors. Nevertheless, my interest in white farmers was now different. I was asking different questions about them: what institutions did they create? what was the role of these institutions in creating gender and class formations and values? Increasingly I became aware that the people I was examining were men, who exhibited (and had acquired) a gender identity in specific institutions which was an inextricable part of their identity as white farmers. In what follows, I review the South African historical literature on white farmers and identify its major concerns, shortcomings and omissions. I pay particular attention to the revisionist literature⁴ because this study is conceived as being part of that literature and although it attempts to forge a new direction, its starting and reference points lie within that literature. My departure from the orthodoxy of revisionist literature is facilitated by the work of some theorists which I describe in section 2. In this section I introduce readers to relevant elements of gender theory. The penultimate section deals with methodology and the final section sets out the structure of the thesis.

Preface

Section 1 Historiography

The study of white farmers in South African history is a mixture of detail and silence. I shall identify two related reasons for this: the choice of subject and the handling of that subject. Historical writing in South Africa has been deeply political and consequently fissured. As two recent reviews of South African history writing confirm, interpretations of the past have often emanated from engaged political positions (Saunders, 1988; Smith, 1988). When an historian chooses a historical subject to research, s/he is making a political choice. In choosing to examine or not examine white farmers, historians are at one level revealing their political agendas. This is quite clear in the treatment given by Afrikaner nationalist historians to the history of a particular group of white farmers, the Afrikaans-speaking **boers**. Similarly, the way

new
boys

⁴ By this I mean that body of work produced from about 1970 onward which, on the basis of a class interpretation of society, challenged the 'conventional wisdom' of the liberal interpretation which posited a fundamental contradiction between economic growth and apartheid and which, on the other hand, placed its faith in the emancipatory capacity of capitalist growth. While the coherence of the school is denied and discontinuities within South African 'radical' history stressed (Bozzoli and Delius, 1990, 13), it is the convention and a convenience to consider this body of work as a single, united school.

in which the research subject is examined and portrayed also bears the stamp of the author's beliefs. Afrikaner nationalist historians, for example, presented the boer as a hero. He was treated as conqueror, God-blessed civilizing agent and freedom fighter (Moodie, 1975). A mythology was created to fuel Afrikaner nationalism.

The approach of revisionist scholars to white farmers was totally different. The revisionists were primarily a group of young, white South African scholars, committed to the struggle against apartheid and infused with the method of historical materialism and the writings of Marx. Writing from the late 1960s onward, they explained the racial injustices in South Africa in terms of the development of capitalism and the emergence of capitalist classes (especially mining capitalists) who promoted the growth of the new economic system by systematically exploiting the local black population. Much of the new work focussed on the mining revolution and the capitalists (like Rhodes) whose labours and vision shaped the new society. No longer were Afrikaans-speaking farmers particularly treated as irrationally racist. White farmers were treated as a class that was economically exploitative of black people. Clearly this was not the only way in which they were conceptualised but it limited the ways in which white farmers could be researched and thought about.

The revisionists considered farmers as part of a class, or in some cases, as a fraction of a class. This provoked questions of economics, politics, and ideology which were distinctive. The questions which revisionists were attempting to answer determined the way in which farmers were researched. Some of these questions were: How did capitalism develop in South Africa? How important was the state? Who controlled the state? How and why did the state become authoritarian and racist? What processes of accumulation gave economic power to whites and denied it to blacks?

By the late 1970s Marxist interpretations of the South African past had become hegemonic (Johnstone, 1982; Marks, 1981). Amongst revisionist historians there were a number of rival interpretations and approaches. While many of these debates need not detain us here, those that related to the agrarian question (and to white farmers) require some elaboration. I shall schematically identify two approaches. While there are some clear differences between them, it is not the intention to suggest that they were distinctive or exclusive - there was much overlap of, dialogue between, division within and movement in these two approaches. The first, pioneered by Colin Bundy, grew out of under-development theory and the impact made by the work of Andre Gunder Frank (1971) in the context of European-centred debates on the transition from feudalism to capitalism. Arguing against the failure of backward third world peasants to make the economic leap demanded by the introduction of the new capitalist economy, Bundy showed that South African cultivators had responded positively to market opportunities, but had been beaten back by the state, itself the instrument of the economic interests of threatened white farmers (Bundy, 1972; Bundy, 1979). This spawned an ever-more detailed and sophisticated corpus of work on the African peasantry, which reached something of an apogee with William Beinart's work on Pondoland (1982). Another strand in this literature shifted the focus to relations between white farmers and African cultivators. Influential work by Stanley Trapido (1978) on the Transvaal in the late nineteenth century made clear the power of white farmers, but also the capacity of African tenant farmers to resist. Trapido was also careful to focus on structural issues, as well as those of agency, arguing for example that the capacity of African cultivators to improve their agricultural productivity was hamstrung by access to land (and uncertainty of tenure), credit, markets and other such factors. Another finding of this approach was that white farmers succeeded largely because of state intervention. Some exceptional, large scale, 'cheque-book' farmers, often with support of the mining industry, succeeded in their own right, but mostly the state was critical in ensuring white farmer viability (Marks and Trapido, 1979).

A different approach to the agrarian question emerged from amongst scholars using Marxist structuralist analysis, particularly the works of Nicos Poulantzas. In a path-breaking work, Mike Morris (1976), attempted to demonstrate that even with labour-tenancy being the major form of labour utilization on farms, capitalist relations of production existed in the early twentieth century. While Morris's article continued to influence writing on the agrarian question, his colleagues at Sussex University began a broader analysis of South African history in which the agrarian question was subsumed in an ambitious attempt to periodize the South African state (Davies, Kaplan, Morris and O'Meara, 1976). Here the purpose was to mesh an analysis of the economic mode of production with an understanding of immanent political forms. A major feature of this project was the effort to understand how 'feudal' relations, featuring **boers** (inappropriately compared with Prussian Junkers to fit into the comparative European-derived literature), were transformed into capitalist relations. Briefly, this analysis posited that land-owning **boers** and in the twentieth century the landless and largely urbanised Afrikaans-speaking population came together under the umbrella of Afrikaner nationalism to wrench economic and political control from the Randlords (English-speaking, metropolitan-linked capitalists who controlled the mining industry and associated enterprises). This, it was held, occurred between the 1920s and 1940s when Afrikaner nationalism gained the support of white workers (and supposedly cut them off from a worker alliance with black colleagues) and finally gained control of the state (1948) as well as creating an independent economic base (by a variety of economic initiatives and by breaking down the exclusionary Englishness of the business world (Davies, 1979; Kaplan, 1977; O'Meara, 1983). From a slightly different angle, using Gramscian tools of analysis, Belinda Bozzoli made a contribution to this project in her examination of the emergence of a national bourgeoisie. She examined how ruling class ideology changed to accommodate a wider set of economic interests, particularly those associated with the rise and diversification of secondary industry. This was a development which created the possibility for a national bourgeoisie to emerge and wrest control of the local economy from imperial capital (Bozzoli, 1981). In this study, white farmers were only bit players with the assumption being that the direction that economy and society was taking was largely determined in the urban areas by white politicians and capitalists. From an entirely different position, David Yudelman (1984), endorsed the view that the gold mining industry, was the motor of South African politics and history, relegating the farmers to positions of relative political and economic unimportance.

Building on the power of radical history in Britain where worker history was experiencing a re-birth and finding academic respectability (Samuel, 1981), social history became the new orthodoxy. Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, it dominated local publishing house lists, English-speaking university reading lists and conference programmes. The new focus was firmly on history from below and there was not much space for a history of the ruling class. The two major growth areas were in the study of African workers and cultivators. A number of scholars were trying to understand amongst other things, the development and role of classes and the connection between the mining centres and the countryside. In the former category, many rich studies emerged mostly out of the History Workshop tradition (van Onselen, 1982; Sapire, 1988).⁵ The focus was on (black) victims, although care was taken to cast them as purposeful actors building sand castles against the imperious tide of history.⁶ In the latter field, Tim Keegan's work on rural transformations on the highveld was important in challenging the mine-centric studies of the Witwatersrand and offering a view which placed

5 The History Workshop was hosted at the University of the Witwatersrand, for the first time in 1978. Thereafter, every three years it was held at that university stimulating detailed histories of the under classes as was its specific intention. The major journals (*Journal of Southern African Studies*, *Journal of African History*, *Social Dynamics*) published many of the conference papers presented at these workshops. The best examples from these workshops were published in four volumes (Bozzoli, 1979; Bozzoli, 1983; Bozzoli, 1987; Bonner, Hofmeyr, James and Lodge, 1989).

6 A sub-theme in the history workshop/social history tradition was the focus on black workers and trade unions. A number of important studies and post-graduate theses emerged to deepen understanding of the development of the black working class and, in some instances, to lend support to trade unions which, at that very time, was beginning to build itself into a national movement (Lewis, 1984; Webster, 1985).

equal stress on the importance of changes in the countryside in determining the trajectory of South African history (Keegan, 1986a).⁷

In the field of agrarian history, a landmark was the appearance of a volume of essays in 1986 (Beinart, Delius and Trapido, 1986). This volume tried to return agrarian history to the centre of the South African historical stage, harking back to the work of W M Macmillan (in the 1920s) and drawing attention to the limits of work on agricultural and rural history since that time. The volume contained primarily works of social history, with limited reference to, and little engagement with, the work of the Sussex structuralists. The political and intellectual antagonism which had accompanied the exchanges between Edward Thompson and Louis Althusser in Europe was echoed in South Africa (Johnson, 1978; Thompson, 1978; Anderson, 1980). A series of sometimes vitriolic, sometimes, polemical, exchanges occurred between social historians and the Sussex structuralists (Morris, 1987; Keegan, 1989a; Keegan, 1989b; Murray, 1989; Bradford, 1990). In this new phase of engagement between political and historiographical factions, the white farmer came little more into focus. In two unusual essays, Peter Delius (1986) and Tim Keegan (1986b), provided detailed accounts of two colourful **boers** (Abel Erasmus and Cornelius de Villiers) operating on the margins of the emerging capitalist economy via primitive accumulation and through the self-arrogated powers of the weak Afrikaner states. My own work shifted the focus onto the organisation of white farmers and their access to the state (Morrell, 1986). And John Bottomley, returned attention to the 1914 Rebellion, locating his explanation in the sharp class divisions between poor white rebels and the landed **heerenboeren** (gentlemen farmers) (Bottomley, 1992). The most comprehensive treatment of settler farmers came from the historical anthropologist Colin Murray (1992). In his study of farming in the Orange Free State, Murray paid close attention to settlers placed on the land under Milner's reconstruction scheme.⁸ In analysing their mixed fortunes, Murray examined their relationships with the state, labour and African share-croppers, and agricultural organisations. His detailed study included coverage of the political behaviour of farmers, of class differentiation and of access to markets and credit. Murray concluded, like many other revisionists, that the state was the key to settler success. Despite the more direct focus on settlers themselves, analyses of white farmers still emphasized their role in the suppression, exploitation and dispossession of black people.⁹ The work began to examine how white farmers operated as a class, how they accessed the state and used it for accumulative purposes, how they related to other classes, how they organised politically, but also how they were actually divided along class lines.

What was missing from this impressive body of work? For our purposes, the most important omission was the study of the social and cultural reproduction and constitution of the agricultural ruling class, the white farmers. The silence surrounding aspects of white farmer history was acknowledged: Tim Keegan, for example, suggested that such work was necessary. His reasons for so saying are illuminating: Better to understand the impact of economic and political change on African peoples (Keegan, 1991, 20).

7 This review cannot possibly do justice to the richness of the work of the social history school. The school brought together scholars from many disciplines, generating work which reflected the different emphases and talents present in those disciplines. It was also inclusive in the sense that scholars working in other historiographical and intellectual milieux presented their work at the Workshops and fed their interests into the broad intellectual and political project which the History Workshop became. Cultural and literary studies flowered within the History Workshop tradition. Labour history, inspired by the *South African Labour Bulletin* and the Trade Union movement, became a strong strand within social history. And while social history focussed primarily on the modern capitalist period (basically 1880 onward), studies on the pre-colonial period was included within its ambit in the works of scholars such as Bonner (1983); Delius (1983) and Petres (1981, 1989).

8 In this emphasis he was in line with a revisionist orthodoxy which argued that the mining revolution and the newly established South African state (post 1902) together created the economic conditions for establishing white settlers successfully on the land and inaugurating capitalist relations of production in the countryside.

9 This neglect was not limited to white farmers. White capitalists were not considered worthy of attention in their own right either. Where they received attention, it was their corporate identities in the context of their role in creating capitalism that were examined (Innes, 1984).

all { Much of South African historiography in the early 1980s was centred on developments occasioned by the mining revolution. It was geographically concerned with the Transvaal and to a lesser extent the northern Cape and Orange Free State. The western Cape, as Martin Nicol (1983) pointed out, was somewhat neglected, or at least not properly incorporated into the historiography. In so far as the agrarian history was concerned, there was an important western Cape literature. Much of that work dealt with the slave economy (and still fruitfully pursues this important period), but two scholars in particular looked at the modern period, tackling similar questions as those which were exercising the minds of historians of the highveld.

Robert Ross attempted an analysis of white farmers, characterising some of them, the "relatively prosperous, market-oriented farm owner-operators, almost invariably white and in general considerable employers of labour" (1983, 193), as a gentry. Herman Giliomee showed how grape, wine and wheat farmers generated capital and became capitalists in the sense, not just of employing labour, but of having capital to invest in, what turned out to be, Afrikaner nationalist business (Giliomee, 1987).

Apart from the intellectual climate, which had a large part to play in determining the way in which South African historiography developed, there were also strong political reasons operating which precluded a fuller treatment of white farmers. The writings referred to above came at a time when the political concern of overthrowing the minority white regime and ushering in a socialist economic order dominated intellectual debates. The framework used by historians who addressed questions of how the class structure of South Africa had been historically formed and what was the specific form of the South African state, was pervasively materialist. Understandings were generated primarily within a Marxist frame.

Many writers attempted to distance themselves from the ruling class project. They did this by associating with the oppressed, by analysing issues which were relevant to political debate and in denying or distancing themselves from their class origins. This kind of approach was most discernible in Paul Rich's White Power and the Liberal Conscience (1984) which shone a censorious light on the white, 'liberal' middle class. The subtext was easy to read: settlers were responsible for an unpardonable crime against indigenous peoples. All whites had a case to answer, and the only way of claiming a morally respectable position was to fight for liberation. Only in this way could the stain of guilt in being white be removed.

Different political and intellectual forces were at work within another tradition of scholarship - the South African liberal tradition. An abhorrence for apartheid and a continuing fascination with race relations characterised this school. Alongside this easily identifiable body of work (exemplified in the general history of South African history produced by Rodney Davenport (1977) which had gone into its fourth edition by 1991)), was a collection of works by non-South African scholars which took the race-centred focus of the liberal school further. The work I am referring to here was British and American in origin, studying Africa, and southern Africa particularly, from the angle of race relations. It was politically and methodologically sympathetic to the liberal school (Elphick, 1983). I review this body of literature here, not to suggest that it was coherent, united by a common approach or shared a common vision. For my purposes, however, its treatment of white farmers differed from the social history approach and it is for this reason, therefore, that it deserves separate mention and consolidated treatment.

American scholars took an interest in South Africa because of some obvious similarities in histories of these respective countries. The key features of this similarity were slave-owning, the overlordship of Britain, the development of a particular pattern of race relations

(segregation) and the occupation by a small settler class of a large geographical area in a process which created a 'frontier tradition'.¹⁰

2 { In South Africa this literature has for the most part existed outside the historiographical debates described above. The need to survey it here comes from its concern with settlers as racial, rather than as class, actors. While social historians were focussing on South Africa's class character, American scholars continued doggedly to emphasize the racial aspect of South African history (Cell, 1982; Frederickson, 1981; Lamar and Thompson, 1981). They also placed greater emphasis on the white ruling class itself. Cell, for example, came forward with the conclusion that segregation was created by "well-educated and comparatively moderate men as an apparently attractive alternative to more extreme forms of white supremacy" (Cell, 1982, x).¹¹ This is an important corrective to the social history tradition's tendency to conflate race and class and to read racism off from, or as an automatic effect of, capitalist modes of accumulation.¹² Stanley Greenberg's work within this comparative genre, although more influenced by the revisionists, gave detailed attention to white farmers, attempting to show what role they had in creating a racist state. He presented these men not simply as class actors driven by economic imperative to develop an unjust and unequal social system, but as men wrestling with difficult choices. This is not to say that his historical treatment of white farmers was any more sympathetic than that of the social historians, but it was fuller.

While the American scholars made a contribution to our understanding of white farmers by considering them in their racial context and by granting them an historical autonomy all too frequently absent in the Marxist works, the work by mainly British historians on white settlers elsewhere in the continent gave greater depth to the emerging picture of white farmers operating in colonial contexts. Studies on Kenya and Rhodesia particularly, generated insights into settler society missing in much of the literature already cited.

This literature is voluminous and I need only refer to those works which shed some light on white farmers in Natal. Here the pre-eminent example is the work of Dane Kennedy (1987). He uses the metaphor of small islands of white in a huge black ocean to explain the nature of settler society. For Kennedy this demographic reality is determining of the way in which settler society operated. He describes settler society as being distinguished to "a remarkable degree by conformity of values and unanimity of purpose" and puts this down to the enemy beyond (Kennedy, 1987, 181). Kennedy's analysis is not incorrect, but it does not explain how the (race) conformity was constructed and tends to assume, rather than demonstrate, a settler identity (as an obvious effect of being demographically outnumbered). For example, Kennedy acknowledges how important settler clubs were, but does not examine how these clubs in particular, and settler society in general, actually reproduced themselves (Kennedy, 1987, 180).¹³

10 Martin Legassick's critique of the view that backward Afrikaners had produced a racially closed political system (in contrast to the open Cape Liberal system) was a vital intervention and allowed for an entire historiography to shift its focus onto the effects of the mining revolution on creating an unequal social system (Legassick, 1980).

11 This is not to say that this approach was without its critics. A sophisticated literature on the development of segregation grew up, in some senses independent of, but in other senses rival to, this approach. In this tradition, the imperatives of capital accumulation and labour reproduction (Legassick, 1974; Wolpe, 1974), control and accommodation of a changing labour force (Hindson, 1987) and problems of legitimacy (Posel, 1991) were issues debated.

12 Stanley Greenberg (1980) may also be considered part of this genre though he, more than his colleagues, engaged with the class-analysis of the social history school, emphasizing class struggle and attempting to show how classes accessed and shaped the state in accordance with their economic needs, but in ways that were limited by the nature of the state itself and by concomitant class struggles. His focus was 'top down' (and here quite distinct from the social history approach). He examined the role that "class actors" played in "elaborating, accommodating, or undermining racial barriers in the market and society" and studied "the class actors' role in forging a state racial apparatus" (x).

13 And this omission is also notable in the brilliant two volume work of Bruce Berman and John Lonedale. They too note the importance of the social clubs for settler cohesion, but venture no further in their enquiry (Berman and Lonedale, 1992, Vol 1, p138). In the end, settler power and influence is explained in terms of their position within a matrix of class forces and in terms of the colonial state.

In two important studies of Southern Rhodesia, D J Murray and Richard Hodder-Williams, focus directly on white farmers and their institutions to show how these related to government in order to ensure their agricultural success (which rested primarily on acquiring labour and having access to profitable (and protected) markets). Murray (1970) examines the growth and influence of farmer associations and Hodder-Williams demonstrates "the often incongruent interplay between central government policy and local demands" (Hodder-Williams, 1983, 1). Both of these studies are pre-eminently concerned with politics - how white farmers attempted, with varying degrees of success, to obtain the support and services of the colonial state. And both agree that without the privileged access to the state, white power and privilege could not have been maintained.

Other studies of these British colonies offer similar analyses, though their emphasis is more often on the relationship of settlers to something: the state, the metropole, economic resources, rather than on the settler society itself (Mosley, 1983). These are clearly essential (but not sufficient) aspects for an understanding of settler society. Neither the coherence of settler society nor the way in which it reproduces itself can be assumed.¹⁴

It is only in recent journalistic accounts that vivid and real descriptions of settler society are offered. In David Caute's graphic eye-witness account of the fall of Ian Smith's Rhodesia, for example, we confront the contradictory, self-confusing, bombastic, hopeless, tragic, deluded and occasionally heroic aspects of white settler society (1983).

Historical writing about Natal shares many of the characteristics identified above, though for the colonial and early twentieth century period it has attracted less interest from revisionist scholars than the highveld. Research on the region's pre-colonial history often led the way in South Africa as a whole, but studies of the major themes of class power and capital accumulation in the later period have been somewhat neglected.¹⁵ Revisionist writing has not taken command of the field in the way it has done elsewhere in South Africa. In Natal, there exists a separate, dynamic and historically meticulous tradition of regional history. This historiography is often described as liberal or conservative, but it has, amongst its strengths, a holistic approach to society. Much of its recent work has focussed on the Anglo-Zulu war of 1879. Here, equal consideration to settler and African involvement has been given. For this reason, and others, my study here has taken seriously this literature and its antecedents.

Arguably, it was Alan Hattersley who laid the foundations for this somewhat parochial school of history writing. He was a Cambridge-educated Englishman who established the history department at the University of Natal in Pietermaritzburg. He wrote prodigiously about the Natal settlers and showed little interest in other aspects of the region's history. He virtually ignored the black population. Subsequent historians of the region, were able to break with this narrowness though retain his fascination with the region. Edgar Brookes and Colin Webb (1965) picked up the strand of history associated with men like James Stuart and wrote a regional history in 1965 which echoed the liberal work elsewhere in its sympathy for the disenfranchisement and dispossession of blacks. The Natal historiography was marked primarily by a concern for the region's particularity. It is probably true to say that the most

14 Looking at the same area and with similar concerns (to understand the relationship of the settler economy to the metropole) but through different (Marxist) eyes little additional light is shed on the white farmers. For example, Edward Brett concluded that the Kenyan settlers included many metropolitan "misfits" who were little more than "parasites upon the Kenyan economy" (Brett, 1973, 168, 212).

15 Jeff Guy (1982, 1990), Carolyn Hamilton (1993), Patrick Harries (1987), David Hedges (1978) and John Wright (1990) are amongst the scholars who have pioneered work on pre-colonial societies, particular the Zulu state. In recent times, a lot of the intellectual energy has been generated by the Cobbing Mfecane thesis (Hamilton, 1995). For the post 1880 period (the establishment and maintenance of colonial rule), important contributions have been made by Helen Bradford (1987), Nicholas Cope (1993), Paul la Haussee (1984), John Lambert (1995), Shula Marka (1970, 1983), Sheila McIntjes (1988) and Henry Slater (1975, 1980) amongst others. It is important to note, however, that all these writers have grappled with particular aspects of Natal history (mostly African politics and resistance), and that an emerging consensus or new paradigm have not resulted.

recent volumes on the region (Duminy and Guest, 1989; Guest and Sellers, 1985; Guest and Sellers, 1994) continue to perpetuate the non-integration of Natal's historiography.

✓ The local treatment of settler society is by and large descriptive and uncritical.¹⁶ Andrew Duminy and Bill Guest acknowledged this in their recent volume (1989, xx), but were unable to make much headway (Freund, 1990, 224; Marks, 1990-1, 114). The shortcomings have been addressed, though not corrected, by Africanist and revisionist scholars. A major reason, suggested earlier, for the jaundiced treatment of settler society was the political persuasions of the authors. They were revolted by the unapologetic white supremacist system which had grown up in Natal. Consequently, the impression of settler society gleaned from their work is unsympathetic. One of the fullest accounts is given by Shula Marks in her analysis of the origins of the Bambatha rebellion - an infamous case of settler bloodletting. As the title of her book (Reluctant Rebellion) suggests, Africans were driven to revolt by bad governance, settler intransigence and gross injustices. Few (including myself) would deny her assessment that "white attitudes towards Africans at the turn of the century were a curious blend of paternalism, fear, and contempt" (Marks, 1970, 11). Marks' focus is on the relations between black and white. She is careful to show the differences and nuances but comes to the judgement that many settlers were inclined to benevolent despotism and white supremacism (Marks, 1970, 15).

2 Marks' assessment of the composition of Natal society is sound too. "The tightly knit nature of white Natal, the free mingling of officials and settlers, of farmers, shopkeepers, and artisans led to a high degree of uniformity and conformity of opinions on most issues, and to stereotypes being formed of the other racial groups" (Marks, 1970, 10). And yet this sketch of settler society misses something, and by its obvious correctness, discourages different approaches. Marks was writing in a period before class analysis became dominant. When it did, her representation of settler society, was accepted and simply fitted into the new class mould. Settlers instead of being understood through the lens of politics and race relations, were now understood through class glasses. In an introduction to the recent publication of the diaries of Catherine Barter, for example, Pat Merrett argues that Charles Barter, civil servant, farmer, journalist, horse-breeder and volunteer soldier, should not be considered a member of the "elite colonial social category the 'gentry'" (Barter, 1995, 32). She comes to this conclusion on the grounds that he was not a major employer of labour, nor was he particularly involved in market-oriented production. This quibbling with labels prevents serious engagement about the class character of the settler population and what their class projects were.

One area where modern writers on Natal history have begun to put their energies, is in the creation of identities (Hamilton, 1993; Freund, 1995). Potentially, this has a great deal to offer the understanding of settler society, but thus far, it has yet to yield this dividend.

Hamilton's approach has been much admired. Her intention was to examine the way in which the Zulu king Shaka was 'authored'. Her argument accepts that the production of history involves "acts of manipulating and imagining" (Hamilton, 1993, 63). She argues, however, that colonial invention was not alone responsible for the image of Shaka. Rather, the image of Shaka resulted from a complex and highly ambiguous interplay between indigenous and colonial discourses. While Hamilton's approach is not designed to assess settler achievement or impact, an effect of her approach is to de-emphasize their importance in making regional

16 Two possible exceptions here are Loudon (1970) - an anthropological study farmers and labourers of 'the district of Newton' a midland location given a mythical name to protect informants but which turns out to be the Karkloof - and Lincoln (1985) a rich institutional study of economy and culture on the sugar plantations.

history. This approach is in line with the trend to emphasise indigenous capacity and to debunk settler-centric approaches (Greenstein, 1995, 115).

Another important regional historiographical development has been the Cobbing-inspired Mfecane debates. In offering a new explanation for the rise of the Zulu state, Cobbing consistently presented the evidence of settlers as 'tainted wells', false and misrepresentative of life in early Natal (Cobbing, 1988). This argument has been taken further by Julie Pridmore and Dan Wylie who argue that the earliest settler-adventurers and later self-appointed interpreters of local tradition invariably distorted the record (Pridmore, 1991; Wylie, 1991; Wylie, 1995). Settler history has in the context of these debates become equated with myth and with the creation of grossly warped stereotypes.

The effect of these diverse studies is to deflect treatment away from settler society. But this is not a major departure from well-established patterns within revisionist literature. Revisionist histories have eschewed settler studies. It is significant that the one study on settler society itself by a revisionist historian focusses on a dissident. Jeff Guy's *The Heretic* (1983), deals with the life of Bishop Colenso, a man who spoke against the settler establishment and chose to remain outside it and indeed, be at war with it. In a revealing passage Guy describes Shepstone's conception of colonial government:

was one in which a group of closely connected officials, often relatives and friends, sealed off their business from the scrutiny of outsiders, on the grounds that only the officials possessed the necessary insights into the secret of native government. Colenso had broken into this system at the time of Langalibalele and exposed the fact that the secret lay in deceit, intimidation, corruption and the threat of force. (1983, 325)

For Guy, there was little to redeem settler society. Only those whites who took up moral positions against the injustices of colonialism seem, in this view, to be worthy of examination. Carolyn Hamilton's position on the issue has similarities with that of Guy. She criticises Cobbing for describing James Stuart as "a racist native administrator who supervised 'land seizures, taxation and *chibalo* (sic) labour'" (Hamilton, 1993, 361, citing Cobbing, 1988 b). Calling for a re-evaluation of Stuart that takes account (amongst other things) "of the complexities of Stuart's career" (1993, 362) her ultimate defence of him is phrased in terms of the dissident. He was, writes Hamilton, "painfully at odds with the prevailing sentiments of his fellow colonists" (1993, 363).

The strength of Hamilton's approach is to recognize complexity and to eschew simplicity. In her discussion of Robert Moor, secretary for native affairs, for example, she provides a refreshing view. Noting that he was an elected representative of Weenen's white farmers, but also charged with protecting the interests of Africans, she concludes that he tried "to maintain a delicate balance between white employers and African workers" (1993, 402). Yet against this, she still offers a view of settlers which comes close to stereotype.

Natal settlers held strong notions of the inbred idleness and irresponsibility of Africans, and the necessity of teaching them the habits of industry and the value of labor. Labor was viewed as the first step towards civilization. (1993, 402-3)

It would not be fair to accuse Hamilton of failing to re-assess settler society for this was not her goal. She has rendered a valuable service in suggesting a more nuanced and less conspiratorial view of settler society. With good effect, we could use her injunction on how to comprehend identity and representation: to paraphrase, we need to understand from what settler society

was adapted (how was it formed) and what were the processes of adaptation and their limitations (Hamilton, 1993, 65).

RECENT CRITIQUES

The approach taken in this thesis is eclectic. It draws not only from the revisionist tradition but also from critiques recently made of that tradition. Thus far I have justified my choice of research subject, in terms of existing lacunae. An additional reason for examining white farmers (or the ruling class), is provided by the recent critique of black scholars in South Africa of whites writing history for and about blacks (Evans, 1990; Jannsen, 1991). While I reject the idea that one can only write about one's own people (Robinson, 1994c), and affirm the idea that we all have multiple locations and thus it is difficult if not impossible to claim any primal attachment to any particular group, this critique has had the effect of renewing interest in 'white' history.

Start? Post? }
My approach is in part a result of a critique of the base-superstructure model which has broadened into a more general critique of the methodological and epistemological foundations of social history (Deacon, 1991, Robinson, 1994a). Post-structural theories uncoupled the cultural superstructure from the material base. New interpretations of power thus emphasised ideological, cultural and other non-material forces rather than direct exploitation in the economic realm. The new approach also critiqued instrumentality and essentialism. In so far as instrumentality was concerned, I was able to avoid assuming neat and linear relationships between, for example, farmer organisation and economic interest. I was freed to explore different dimensions and relationships within the farming community. As far as essentialism was concerned, I was able to operate from a position which treated white farmers in complex and fluid ways, taking account of their multiple identities. I was able to explore these identities without feeling compelled to privilege one above another. Another contribution to this study of what I am baldly going to call, post-modern theory, was the new awareness of the voice (Spivak, 1988).¹⁷ Noting that all writers have a location which is political, in the sense that it is enmeshed in existing relations of power and inequality, the new approach makes it possible to make one's own authorial voice heard more plainly (and less apologetically). This body of theory made it comfortable for me to write about a community filled with familiar names and family memories, without trying to conceal my own origins or to soft-soap the narrative.

As the title of this thesis suggests, a major concern is the gendered analysis of masculinity. In the following section, I unfold some of the theory utilized to make sense of the men of the midlands. Although this thesis marks a departure from the revisionist tradition in its concern with masculinity, there have been debates about the need to engender studies of South African history. Social history, as much as any other branch of South African historiography, has not been sensitive to gender although it has recently become aware of this shortcoming (Bozzoli and Delius, 1990, 33).

There has existed, for some time, a vigorous, though essentially ghettoized women's history. The work especially of Cherryl Walker and Julie Wells has drawn attention to the role of (mostly black) women in resistance (Walker, 1990; Walker, 1992; Wells, 1991). With some exceptions (Eales, 1989), the work did not influence the mainstream of social history - women's history had an additive rather than transformationary impact on historical writing. In

17 There are many objections to talking about 'post-modernism' as one coherent body of thought. As an example, I cite Judith Butler writing about post-modernism in the realm of feminism. "Is it an historical characterization, a certain kind of theoretical position, and what does it mean for a term that has described a certain aesthetic practice now to apply to social theory and feminist social and political theory in particular? Who are these postmodernists? Is this a name that one takes on for oneself, or is it more often a name that one is called?" (Butler, 1992, 3).

the last year or two, the demand for the inclusion of women in South African history has been made more strongly. The most powerful proponent has been Helen Bradford, busy herself with an ambitious study of women's history.

At the 1995 South African Historical Society's biennial conference at Rhodes University, Grahamstown, Bradford launched a critique of South Africa's "androcentric historiography" (Bradford, 1995). She noted the absence of women in history writing and showed how this impoverished and corrupted historical analysis. In her approach, Bradford was heeding Catherine Hall's call that feminists "needed to fill out the enormous gaps in our historical knowledge which were a direct result of male domination of historical work. How had women lived in the past, what had they experienced ..." (Hall, 1992, 5). While Bradford's attack could not be resisted, it fell short of a potentially more disruptive break with tradition. Such a path was sketched by Linzi Manicom (1992) who argued that inserting women into history was not enough, and that taking gender seriously involved a reconsideration of perspective, not simply an inclusion of a neglected category.

In this study, I attempt to respond to the feminist critique not by writing about gender alone or by integrating women into the history, but by weaving an analysis of class and gender together. In this process I focus not on women, but on men, in fact as neglected a category as women. This may seem an odd claim, particularly in the light of Bradford's critique. But it is easily substantiated. It is true that South African history has been written as a story about men. But it is not true that South African history has been about men. The difficulty lies in the notion of man. Essentialist conceptions of man are the problem. Man is considered to have an essence - aggressive, violent, acquisitive, insensitive, unemotional. What is not problematized is his social identity. What is not acknowledged is the social construction of masculinity. I pick up these issues in the next section.

There have been two local, but distinct, responses to the silence about men. The first response has come from novelists and the literary world. Amongst the most important writers has been the gay novelist, Damon Galgut. His award-winning novel, The Beautiful Screaming of Pigs (1992), was described by a reviewer as one of the first novels to examine the difficulties of masculinity in South Africa (Boehmer, 1993, 9). In psychology, not surprisingly, there has been important work on masculinity. Catherine Campbell (1992) studied the links between violence, generational difference and masculinity among black working class men in Natal. Her colleague, Grahame Hayes, in reviewing her work and related studies of contemporary violence regretted that "a specific focus on masculinity" as social construct, was not evident as this might have unlocked "some of the problems of men as the main agents and perpetrators of violence" (Hayes, 1992, 81). Amongst historians, the challenge of historically exploring the historical construction of masculinity has scarcely been taken up. In a conference on violence at Oxford (which resulted in a special issue of the Journal of Southern African Studies in 1992) William Beinart gave attention to the relationship of masculinity and violence. This is clearly a very important area, and takes the understanding of 'resistance' in South African history into a gender-sensitive direction, but Beinart's work is the exception.¹⁸ While many other historians have been writing about changing gender relations, none has examined changes in masculinity itself. As John Tosh notes with concern for the case of Britain, there is a "reluctance of the historical profession to explore the potential of this new perspective" (Tosh, 1994, 179).¹⁹

18 Beinart's recent work, particularly his general history, demonstrates high levels of gender-sensitivity though the absence of historical research on masculinity inevitably means that this receives limited attention (Beinart, 1994).

19 It is possible to misrepresent the extent to which mainstream (or what Jeff Hearn (1992) calls 'malestream') history, has actually taken note of the gender factor. For example, Robert Ross (1996) recently attempted to assess the accuracy of the description of Cape farm labour relations as patriarchal. Similarly, Charles van Onselen (1992) has been trying to understand farm labour relations in the Western Transvaal using similar conceptual apparatus. These are welcome signs, but we need to go beyond them in order to understand the 'rule of the father'. We need to understand the father himself, his class location (and all the social institutions which give him his class and gender identity) and not just in relationship to people within his power.

Another response, has been the emergence of a male 'fight-back' position in response to the perception that feminism and woman's history had become self-righteous, shallow and anti-male.²⁰ This view objects to the focus on women alone, the essentializing of men as bad, and the consequent exclusion of what is in fact a very important aspect of the history of gender relations and, as Bradford argues for SA history as a whole (1995a, 248). A rare example of such writing is by F A Mouton. In a review of the 'angry' book by Christina Landman, The Piety of Afrikaans Women (1994), he deplores her "feminist outrage and lack of historical rigour" which, amongst other things, represents Afrikaans women as the victims of a male-created "restrictive" female subculture (Mouton, 1994, 326-327).

Section 2 Masculinity and Class amongst the Settlers

In trying to make sense of the gender questions raised by tackling a predominantly male research constituency, I turned to the 'men's studies' literature, now well developed in Britain, the United States and Australia.²¹ Before turning to examine what theoretical assistance they might make to this study, I set out some relevant issues and propositions related to this research project. My senior secondary education at one of the private, elite, single-sex boarding schools of the midlands (Hilton College) places me in a good position to intuit some of the central gender issues. Some questions that came to mind were: What kind of boys/men did the families and institutions of the midlands produce? Which values were esteemed and which denigrated? How did these boys/men come to be 'masculine'? What was the connection between being an individual in a school like Hilton, and being an adult member of the midland gentry?

In framing these questions, I naturally had a sense of some of the answers. I had experienced my years at Hilton as lonely, traumatic and confused. I had also known the ecstasy of being in a winning sports team. I had experienced the competitiveness of inter-house rivalry, the snobbery that went with wearing the well-known (and respected) school uniform. I had flaunted my membership of the school as a source of power in the face of those who felt themselves inferior because they'd only been to a government school. I had taken retrospective pride in having survived the cruelties and emotional deprivations of the school, I had come to value team loyalty and appreciate the power of male friendship. It has been more than twenty years since I was at that school. Inactive in the old boys society, I nevertheless take quiet satisfaction from the academic and other successes of the school, presented in its quarterly magazine. These experiences basically left me with no doubt that the school experience produced a we/they dichotomized sense of belonging, which was fiercely partisan and produced loyalties under the most unlikely circumstances. As an academic reflecting back on these boyhood memories, it became manifestly obvious that the sense of belonging reverberated with race and class connotations. It was with the help of certain gender theories that I came to understand better the gender aspects of this sense of belonging.

The propositions which I set out here could not have been made without the assistance of the gender theory I shall shortly discuss, and in this sense they flowed from that theory, rather than preceded it as a set of untested intuitions. Nevertheless it is helpful to identify them at the start of this section as they will give the reader early notice of a theoretical driving force. Men

20 There is no suggestion here that the writers themselves are anti-male, but some writers assume the worst motives and impute particular malevolent archetypal traits to men. Anne Mager's otherwise fascinating work on gender relations in the Eastern Cape, for example, often tacitly explains male violence in terms of 'the male psyche' (1995). The work in sociology by Diana Russell has a similar tendency, implicitly explaining, for example, gang rape in Soweto (1991) and date rape at the University of Zululand (1993) in terms of rampant and uncontrollable male sex-drive.

21 The field is large, but see for example, (Brittan, 1989; Connell, 1995; Hearn, 1992; Kimmel, 1987; Morgan, 1992).

are not just men, with a fixed masculinity. My own experience tells me that this is so, and the post-modern critiques outlined in the previous section, confirm it. Masculinity is fluid, changing and historically constructed. For the individual, it is an identity that is realised throughout life, powerfully but not irrevocably, in childhood. Masculinity is a gender identity which is personal in the sense that an individual has a specific experience of what it means to be, in this case, a boy/man. A person apprehends his (let us keep with the male example) gender identity within a social gender environment and there is a constant interplay between the two. There are strong social prescriptions about what is (and what is not) acceptable gender behaviour. Such prescriptions originate primarily with the ruling class, which, through a process of contestation, disseminates these values throughout wider society. Here they operate in contradictory ways: on the one hand, they provide (ruling class) men with a verbal and bodily vocabulary by which class-based recognition occurs - in this sense, these gender values are class-bound and exclusive. On the other hand, the dissemination of values through society, interpolates all men as 'men', which is to say that it produces an inclusive system by which men come together with a shared understanding of masculinity. No system can ever be totally inclusive, and indeed, it is an argument of post-modernism that every inclusive system requires for its success an 'other', who/which is not included. Nor is a system ever more than an approximation of what existed. No boy/man was ever or could ever be fully within the field of hegemonic masculinity. An example from school briefly will suffice to demonstrate the point: a school prefect might be (in his public self) a perfect exemplar of hegemonic masculinity; play rugby for the first team, carry out his duties fairly and efficiently, warmly greet the opposing team when it arrived to compete at sports, stand at the door for the headmaster's wife to go by (and doff his cap at the same time). But he might also sneak off and have a smoke, or leave the school without permission to see a girlfriend, or ignore the instruction of a schoolmaster, or have a clandestine sexual relationship with a junior boy.

Yet, despite personal defiance and exceptions to the rule a masculinity that was hegemonic was established within society. This masculinity prescribed to males what to do, and there were generally unpleasant consequences for those who ignored it, defied it, or flouted it. Yet most boys/men accepted, contributed and acquiesced to the existence of hegemonic masculinity. But some did not, could not or would not. Hegemonic masculinity marginalised individuals and groups of men. It is also the case, that women are excluded by hegemonic masculinity. This is not to say that hegemonic masculinity is necessarily misogynistic - chivalry, respect for the weak and honouring women (particularly the mother), for example, could all alleviate the exclusionary aspects of hegemonic masculinity. But these considerations do not conceal the fact that though women might be accommodated to hegemonic masculinity, they can not be included.

Embedded within these assertions, are ideas taken from the works of a number of gender theorists, most prominently Bob (R W) Connell. Since the early 1980s Connell has been analysing issues of gender inequality. His initial training was as an historian. His writing was (and remains) powerfully influenced by his experience as a student activist in the 1960s. His early work attempted to analyse class-based inequalities in schooling. This work led him on to consider, increasingly as his major intellectual interest, issues of gender inequality (Connell et al, 1982). Coming from a position of political affinity with feminism, Connell's work tries to take the concern for social justice into the realm of masculinity. Connell is amongst the foremost of scholars writing from a social-constructivist position. His work, summarised in his best selling 1995 book, Masculinities, has been and remains influential for a stratum of like-minded writers.²² While I rely heavily on the theoretical insights of Connell and allied writers, there is a body of work which is less helpful. This operates with a view of masculinity

22 Much of Masculinities was published in journal form before it became widely available as a book. In this thesis, the original articles will be cited, rather than the book which became available after much of the thesis had been written.

that is either biologically or psychoanalytically determined. This essentialist treatment of masculinity allows little scope for historical contingency.²³ There is another corpus of work, exceedingly popular in men's groups and in the new men's movement, which also has limited value. Authors writing out of this position, hold that men are beleaguered, that there is a crisis of masculinity and that psychic healing has to take place to overcome the problem. Much of this work is hostile, or at least indifferent, to feminist theory and its accompanying political concerns.²⁴

In attempting to get away from the idea of one archetypal masculinity, Bob Connell created the concept of hegemonic masculinity. This concept drew attention to the existence of other masculinities (for example, gay masculinity (Connell, 1992)) and in the process de-naturalised a version of masculinity which was white, European and middle-class. Connell's theorization allows one to distinguish between masculinities, and opens up the possibility of examining how one masculinity becomes and remains hegemonic over others. It is important to stress that this is an historical process. While it may be inevitable that boys acquire a sexual identity called masculinity, the process always takes place within an historical gendered context and the form which that masculinity takes will always be historically determined.

What is hegemonic masculinity, what does it do, how is it defined, who 'belongs to it'? There is some disagreement over these questions, but we can identify a core of agreement. "Hegemonic masculinity' is always constructed in relation to various subordinated masculinities as well as in relation to women" (Connell, 1987, 183). It can be defined as "the configuration of gender practice which embodies the currently accepted answer to the problem of the legitimacy of patriarchy" (Connell, 1995, 77). Not all men in positions of power and influence demonstrate or subscribe to hegemonic masculinity, but "hegemony is likely to be established only if there is some correspondence between cultural ideal and institutional power, collective or individual" (Connell, 1995, 77). The function of hegemonic masculinity is primarily to legitimate patriarchy (men's dominance over women). Echoing the origins of the term in the work of Antonio Gramsci, this is achieved primarily through a "successful claim to authority" rather than direct use of violence (Connell, 1995, 77).

But hegemonic masculinity is also contradictory. As Mike Donaldson puts it, it is "exclusive, anxiety-provoking, internally and hierarchically differentiated, brutal and violent" (Donaldson, 1993, 645). And yet, many of the bearers of hegemonic masculinity seem puny and quite unable to meet its strenuous gender demands. Here Donaldson relates to a literature on the fragility of masculinity. This literature, primarily psychoanalytical, stresses how weak masculine identity for individuals can sometimes be, and finds in this, explanations for the formation of dissident and also extremely conformist masculine identity and the possibility of change in forms of 'masculinity' (Brod, 1987; Kaufman, 1987; Sherrod, 1987; Segal, 1990; Tolson, 1977).²⁵

23 For a discussion on some of the strengths and weaknesses of these two approaches, see Connell, 1995; Deaux, 1987; Hearn and Morgan, 1990; Pleck, 1981.

24 The American new right has latched on to some of this literature, using it to promote a view of masculinity that is white, middle-class and homophobic (Connell, 1993). Amongst the most influential of the literature which calls men back to their primordial roots is Robert Bly's *Iron John* (1990) and Sam Keen's *Fire in the Belly* (1992). This literature encourages men to get in touch with their feelings, to reclaim their sense of dignity, to assert themselves. The methods generally recommended relating more intimately with men (in such men's only rituals as drumming and hugging trees) and standing up to women. A slightly different approach is found in 'victimist' work which argues that gender inequalities exist, but that it is men who are the victims (Farrell, 1993).

25 22 Connell, on the other hand, rejects the idea of the insecurity of masculinity. "I disagree profoundly with the idea that masculinity is an impoverished character structure. It is a richness, a plenitude. The trouble is that the specific richness of hegemonic masculinity is oppressive, being founded on, and enforcing, the subordination of women. Most men do become secure in their physical masculinity. It isn't just a matter of the end of puberty, the first 'nocturnal pollution' (carefully recorded in the diary), the breaking of the voice, and the pleasure of having to shave. It is, crucially, a social process, a matter of the social practices that lead boys into adulthood" (Connell, 1983, 22).

Precisely who produces hegemonic masculinity is uncertain. Is it the elites, the broad mass of 'straight' men, or particular role models? Similarly, it is not clear what hegemonic masculinity can do for men. Jeff Hearn advances a gloomy view of hegemonic masculinity, arguing that men "oppress each other, and in turn ourselves" (Hearn, 1992, 83). And this view is predominant, though here again, Donaldson provocatively asks can not hegemonic masculinity "enrich and satisfy"? (Donaldson, 1993, 646). In order to answer these many questions, Carrigan, Connell and Lee, set out hegemonic masculinity as "a question of how particular groups of men inhabit positions of power and wealth, and how they legitimate and reproduce the social relationships that generate their dominance" (Carrigan, Connell and Lee, 1987, 92).

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Viewed from the perspective of a boy, the construction of hegemonic masculinity is a lengthy and complex process. Connell argues that in the process of becoming a man, boys develop a relationship with their bodies through and by which they express their domination of/distance from women. In making this argument, Connell brilliantly brings together the social and psychological (the collective and individual) elements of masculinity to explain how, at two levels, the fact of hegemonic masculinity occurs. He argues that masculinity is achieved neither in early childhood, nor in the oedipal or school phases, but via a complex process over a 20 year period (Connell, 1983, 31).

The concept of hegemonic masculinity is important for historians to work with, argues John Tosh, "because it reminds us that masculinity carries a heavy ideological freight, and that it makes socially crippling distinctions not only between men and women, but between different categories of men - distinctions which have to be maintained by force, as well as validated through cultural means" (Tosh, 1994, 192).

In this thesis I attempt to weigh the ideological freight and measure its consequences by developing the concept of settler masculinity to capture the colonial and class character of masculinity in turn of the century Natal. This is not a term that has currency and it is the purpose of this thesis to give it some content and theoretical specificity. For the moment we can simply identify its broad features: it was the masculinity of the midland gentry. It was produced in a variety of ways and locations which are treated separately in the chapters of this thesis. Settler masculinity was class and race specific and powerfully moulded by the colonial context. Settler masculinity became hegemonic as a result of the class and gender power of the midland farmers which was expressed in the durability and influence of the institutions which that class created. It was through those institutions that masculinity was disseminated and perpetuated, and in which it was created and shaped.

Living in the colonies provided settlers both with a social environment which in important respects was free of the constraints that operated in the metropole. On the frontiers, settlers (with guns) were virtually a law unto themselves. In the context, as Jock Phillips shows for New Zealand, they developed a frontier masculinity which was rough, loose and anti-establishment (1987). The freedom of the periphery was reduced by the development of the colonial state and closer economic ties with the metropole (McMichael, 1984). In Australasia, the colonial state itself attempted to eradicate frontier masculinity and replace it with a more conformist set of gender values which stressed family life and workplace discipline, to meet the growing demands of the economy. This was paralleled by organic changes within the settler population itself, the leading sections of which attempted to develop a social image which mimicked that of the metropole. The phenomenal growth of settler economies (Denoon, 1983) led to urbanisation. Both the nature of the settler economy and its urbanisation patterns were different from those in the metropole and generated distinct forms of masculinity and gender relations. In New Zealand, for example, a particularly assertive masculinity was formed around sport and military achievements (Phillips, 1984). While metropolitan trends were always

influential in the colonies, they were not determinant, and local struggles and conditions were always crucial in determining the state of gender relations (Gilding, 1991). Interestingly, colonial images of masculinity also came to shape metropolitan ideas. This was specifically the case with novels by writers such as Rider Haggard and Kipling (Kaarsholm, 1989; McClintock, 1990). Settler masculinity was not just a derivative of metropolitan masculinity. It was both influenced, and informed by, metropolitan gender relations, but remained distinct.

In this study, I have selected a number of social institutions in which to examine the development of masculinity. These provide the context within which the historical development of masculinity can be examined (Connell, 1995, 29; Manicom, 1992, 465). Institutions each have their own gender regime, comprising their own characteristic set of gender relations (Connell, 1987, 523). The gender regime of each institution is the result of contestation and struggle, as well as being shaped by, and reflecting, the social forces within broader society. The reading of masculinity within a particular institution's gender regime may differ from that of hegemonic masculinity (Connell, 1990b, 1991) but in the case of this study, each institution examined was an incubator for hegemonic masculinity. Since the late nineteenth century, social institutions have become prolific (Popkewitz, 1991). Many of these were created around the new professions, but many more were centred on leisure time use, shared interest and other middle class activities. Their significance for gender relations in this period increased as they superseded private domains as the major sites in which gender relationships were worked out. The new institutions were organised according to strict hierarchy. Their rise was associated with industrialisation and modernity. It had the effect of converting the power of the male head of household into a social and cultural form which was mirrored through and created in a range of organisations which sprang up to regulate, to unite, to exclude (Hearn, 1992).

Institutions which have been the objects of gendered research in other contexts, informed my choice. These were: schools (Connell et al, 1982; Heward, 1988; Mangan, 1981); sport (Messner and Sabo, 1990); professional associations (Hearn, 1992, 146-149); the military (Gibson, 1994; Nye, 1993; Phillips, 1984); the family (Gilding, 1991). In this thesis I have chosen not to examine the colonial state or the labour market, both considered to be extremely important in advanced societies and in industrial contexts. In Natal, the colonial state was relatively weak, had limited resources, few personnel, and the senior personnel were, up until 1893 at least, primarily Britons on colonial duty, rather than settlers. For this reason, the colonial state was less influential than the state in advanced industrial societies in genderizing life, though this is not to say that it was without influence. The laws passed and enacted were a major vehicle for the establishment of a gender order.²⁶ My discussion of production as a locus of gender relations is limited, being undertaken through the prism of producer organisations (farmer associations). Agricultural production in rural Natal was individualistic, independent and isolated. The mechanisms of the industrial context, for example described by Cockburn (1983), were clearly not at play here. I will argue that settler masculinity was a product primarily of settler institutions. These institutions, established by the settlers outside the realm of the state and the economy, were very much class institutions. They were never open to blacks, and seldom open to women. Outsiders (ethnic, geographical, class) were grudgingly admitted, and in the process were fitted into the class and gender mould.²⁷ The institutions were places where settlers (generally male) met, interacted, identified, planned and socialised.

26 Bob Connell (1987) developed the concept of the gender order to define the state of gender relations in society at any one time. The gender order is conceived as the "current state of play" in the "macro politics of gender" (Connell, 1987, 139). The gender order is the sum of contesting gender practices, and includes hegemonic masculinity and the particular configuration of patriarchal relations operating at a particular point. The gender order, simply put, describes the extent and nature of gender inequality at any one point in society.

27 The reproductionist phrasing here, jars. It is by no means intended to suggest that the institutions unproblematically and always successfully transformed their members into upright members of settler society. But, despite this qualification, their success rate was astonishingly high.

Institutions not only regulated social life, they provided nodes of identification. They were critical in networking.

The institutions were characterised to an amazing degree by the overlap of membership and participation. Some approaches to the question of class power have questioned the significance of networks and the phenomenon called in sociology, 'overlapping directorships'. Deservedly the best known of these objections was raised by Nicos Poulantzas (1969) in his structuralist critique of the work of Ralph Miliband (1968). He argued that the capitalist state and the ruling class could not be understood by examining the location and actions of human agents. He offered an alternative explanation, locating capitalist power and economic exploitation within a broader understanding that is, of modes of production and the relationship of class forces to the state. Since then, structuralism has fallen from grace, and the emphasis has switched back to agency with the recognition that networks are crucial to class rule. In explaining the success of the ruling class Tom Bottomore argues that as an "organised minority" it is a "more effective collective actor than are other classes" (Bottomore, 1989, 11). Efficient collective action is facilitated by family connections, the social and political interaction of members and by distinctive shared educational experience, all of which will be stressed in the chapters that follow.

In this section, I have been making constant reference to class. I do not conceive of class in economic terms, as constituted in terms of the means and relations of production. I follow the line developed by, among others, Pierre Bourdieu, who argues that a "class is defined as much by its **being perceived** as by its **being**, by its consumption - which need not be conspicuous in order to be symbolic - as much as by its position in the relations of production (even if it is true that the latter governs the former)" (Bourdieu, 1984, 483). For Bourdieu, classes so acting are "real social groups" rather than the "probable classes" conceived of by Marx (Bourdieu, 1991, 231). The real social group which this thesis is concerned with - the white farming community - is a social unit which has both class and gender aspects. According to Connell, in reality these cannot be separated, though conceptually it is useful and necessary to do so: "gender relations are parallel to, interacting with, and in some sense constitutive of, class relations" (Connell, 1987, 46).

In trying to understand the ruling class of the midlands, I have already indicated, that the regional historiography provides little comparative assistance. The same is true of the broader sociological and historical literature. There is very little work on ruling class men, leading to calls recently for "a sociology of ruling-class men" (Donaldson, 1993, 655). In similar vein, Fred Pfeil notes the political importance of understanding the politics of straight white men in contemporary US, pleading that they not be treated as demons with no prospect of rehabilitation (Pfeil, 1995).

One of the major questions addressed here is: how are class/gender identities and relations reproduced over time? Bourdieu defines reproduction as the processes "by which any group endeavors to pass on to the next generation the full measure of power and privileges it has itself inherited" (Bourdieu, quoted in Nye, 1993, 17). Such reproduction is not automatic. It involves processes which can historically be identified and understood. Such processes should not be reduced to the purposive actions of individuals or classes. In a useful attempt to explain ruling class power, the Marxist Goran Therborn suggested that "class-specific collective action is ... sustained basically by inter-linking networks of class members" (Therborn, 1986, 117). This is an important point because it stresses the connection between the actions of individuals and the destiny of classes. Throughout this thesis I shall be examining how class and gender regimes are created and this involves examining both individual and collective action in institutional contexts. It also involves an examination of how the classes represented

themselves - how they acted in class and gendered ways in public, for it is in the representation of oneself as a gendered and classed actor to the world, that a class profile is created. It is in this process that social distance or social proximity is created (Bourdieu, 1991, 29). In the distinction made here between class action and class representation I am alerting the reader to two separate points. The first point is that individual actions do contribute to class identity and profile, but they may also be incongruent, contradictory, ill-fitting, and unrepresentative of the class at large. Secondly, how a class represents itself is not necessarily the same as how the class is. Classes have histories which authorise their existence, which give them a gloss, which incorporate justification and rationalisation. These histories also omit, distort, emphasise and de-emphasise various aspects of the past. In this thesis I examine both the actions of a class and the images, stories and histories which it developed about itself.

Class and gender identity is formed and acted out in highly complex ways. Such identity is confirmed and affirmed, for example, by constant participation in pastimes in which people come to understand themselves as members of a class and having a particular gender identity. In the same processes, people equally can come to realize that they are not members of a particular class and do not have a particular gender identity.²⁸ Philip Corrigan explains this process as "a structured set of exchange and use - i.e. valuing - relationships which are gradually learned through repeated senses of what is, and what is not, thought to be 'the case' (Corrigan, 1990, 280 (emphasis added)). Class roles and identities have "not the power automatically or intrinsically to perpetuate (their) dominance" (Bourdieu, 1991, 58). It is thus critical for gender and class relations constantly to be repeated. Put another way, constant participation in public and private life constitutes the process of class creation and reproduction.

When the settler farmers acted, their actions were necessarily always gendered. Their actions created, consolidated or transformed class and gender identities. In a school, for example, the holding of assembly, the timetable, the sports matches, all contributed to the temporal structure and routine of settler life. In the farmer associations, it was the meetings set down by time and place, well in advance, that brought farmers together routinely, that reinforced their power at each sitting. These acts produced gender and class hierarchies, values and routines. Institutions were an ideal setting for repetitive social acts because they have their own rhythms and they outlive their members.

Settler masculinity developed in the wider social setting of colonial patriarchy. There is a huge feminist literature on patriarchy.²⁹ Rather than chart the many twists and turns which debates about patriarchy have taken (Butler, 1990; Hearn, 1987; Rowbotham, 1974) I wish merely to underscore the importance of the fact of patriarchy:

What matters about oppression is not an ultimate 'why', but the fact that it exists; that is has a history; that it is possible to explore its dynamic; and that it is possible to fight it. We can see the power relations of gender, as I suggest we should see the power relations of class, as a historically composed structure whose (always partial) unity is imposed by nothing except its own logic of development. One thing is crucial in this: the continuation of a structure of oppression is not a fact of nature, it is a practical achievement. (Connell, 1983, 76)

28 Judith Butler stresses the importance of repetition in the creation of "intelligible identity". The I can only exist, she argues, through constant, repetitive assertion of individual agency and identity, in terms "of rules that are partially structured along matrices of gender hierarchy and compulsory heterosexuality" (Butler, 1990, 145).

29 An indication of how active have debates been on the subject can be seen by contrasting the historian Lawrence Stone's pithy, but narrow, description of patriarchy twenty years ago as "the despotic authority of husband and father" (Stone, 1977, 109) with Sylvia Walby's all-encompassing definition: "a system of social structures and practices in which men dominate, oppress and exploit women" (Walby, 1990, 20).

In South Africa, colonial patriarchy has been only sketchily portrayed. It was profoundly influenced by metropolitan currents particularly the ideology of domesticity which located women in the home. Colonial patriarchy operated through the prism of race which to some extent kept white women out of production while providing them with support in the area of childcare. The incorporation of African women into the colonial system facilitated the emergence of an ideology of inferiority where prejudice against the working classes in Britain was transposed onto blacks in South Africa (Walker, 1990, 11-12). This perspective, is consonant with Connell's view that "Men gain a dividend from patriarchy in terms of honour, prestige and the right to command" (Connell, 1995, 82).

In Natal, the position of white women under patriarchy is known in broad terms (Beall, 1982). They did not have the vote, few were admitted into the colonial service, industry or business. Where they were present in these spheres, they occupied junior positions.³⁰ While they had control over their own property (and could own and bequeath land), very few women did own farms or companies.³¹ The position with women and weapons was more complicated. Though women were not allowed to join military regiments, in the rural areas many women could use or owned rifles. As early as 1908 young girls (over 14 years) were encouraged to join miniature rifle clubs to learn to shoot.³² In 1912, for example, Mrs C D Hill (nee Speirs) won the Dargle Rifle Association shoot.³³ And it was common for farmers' wives and daughters to join Rifle Associations (Reed Interview, 1993) This could be explained in terms both of the way in which women were perceived within settler masculinity (see chapter 8) as well as with reference to the growing militarism in the colony (see chapter 6).³⁴

Table 1

SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF WHITE EMPLOYMENT IN 1891

<u>Occupational Sector</u>	<u>% of total whites</u>	<u>% of females</u>
Agriculture	18.6	3.5
Manufacturing and Mining	15.9	16.0
Construction	11.3	0
Commerce and Finance	18.4	4.7
Transport and Communication	7.1	0.3
Services	28.7	75.5
Total	100	100

(From Beall, 1982, 119)

30 For example, in 1904, there were only 11 white women compared to 2818 white men employed in local government, and 195 women employed in 'Defence' compared with 2526 men (Beall, 1982, 226).

31 In 1891 58 women were recorded as farmers in their own right (Beall, 1882, 120).

32 Natal, Annual Report of the Commandant-General, Natal Colonial Forces for the year 1908, 3.

33 Name embossed on trophy in possession of David and Liz Kimber.

34 AGO 1/8/56 69A/1897 In an attempt to beef up civilian military readiness, 700 rifles and nearly 70 000 rounds of ammunition were issued to members of Rifles associations in 1896 and 1897.

Table 2

SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF WHITE EMPLOYMENT IN 1904

<u>Occupational Sector</u>	% of total whites	% of females
Agriculture	15.6	3.5
Mining	0.6	0
Manufacturing	11.9	12.3
Construction	13.2	0
Commerce and Finance	19.7	13.3
Transport and Communication	8.2	0.5
Services	30.8	66.7
Total	100	100

(From Beall, 1982, 121)

In terms of employment opportunity, the position of women improved in this period. In terms of the law, however, areas of discrimination remained. For example, adultery was not considered grounds for divorce in the case of a man (until 1937) but until 1910, adulterous women were deprived of all maintenance by their former spouses. Even after that moral opprobrium weighed far more heavily on her than it did on a man in a similar position (Beall, 1982, 103).

To conclude this section: settler masculinity, like all masculinities was a dynamic, fluid phenomenon. It was primarily created in public, single-sex institutions, thus lending support to Hearn's view (1992) that hegemonic masculinities were from the 1870s onward primarily created within public patriarchies. Within the institutions gender regimes existed. These often bore a strong similarity with metropolitan models (for example, the public schools). Hierarchy, inclusion and exclusion were more strongly accentuated in the colonial setting, however, because of the 'race threat' and because of an ambivalent relatedness to the metropole (explored in chapter 6) which made the settlers more English than the English on the one hand, and highly antagonistic to metropolitan snobbery and high-handedness on the other. Settler masculinity was markedly cohesive largely because of the limited numbers of white settlers. Settlers intermarried frequently and networks of extraordinary complexity threaded through the institutions here discussed, producing patterns of cross-membership which might best be represented by a closely woven rug, with the warp representing the institutions and the weft thread the settlers. One would find that most weft threads would encounter, in some way or other, every warped thread. Settler masculinity was therefore very class-bound. It was resistant to intrusion (by other races and classes) and showed itself to be quite intractable. In short settler masculinity had a relatively small group of 'members', most known or related to one another in some way. Its content changed, but because of the exclusive nature of its institutions, it was not able to accommodate change easily. The status of settler masculinity as hegemonic masculinity, which this thesis attempts to demonstrate, was challenged, modified, never fully achieved. Yet it had a stately carriage which took it through turbulence. Its institutions survived a number of crises, with little change, and within these, new gendered adherents were produced.

Section 3 Methodology

This study accepts, but not in a voluntarist way, the importance of human agency. Individuals are important, but they act within institutional contexts and it is within these institutions that they can well be understood. Secondly, this study distances itself from the view, memorably expressed by Lenin, that politics "begins where the masses are; not where there are thousands, but where there are millions" (quoted in Carr, 1964, 50). There were only 6395 whites in the Natal midlands in 1880.³⁵ Their significance cannot, however, be gauged from their numbers.

The focus of this study is not on the state. This banal statement is of considerable methodological importance. Many studies of South African colonial history depend largely on archival documents for their research base. There have been important departures from this tendency. From its inception twenty years ago, the history workshop based at the University of the Witwatersrand has emphasised history from below. This has generated a large amount of work documenting people's history and using in this process, oral histories (Keegan, 1988; Matsetela, 1982; Nkadimeng and Relly, 1983). More recently, the importance of personal testimony has been extended to the realm of African women in the countryside (Bozzoli, 1991). Yet, with a few exceptions, studies of the ruling class and its relationships have been conducted through the lens of official documents.

This study uses archival sources to augment other data. Instead of making state derived or directed documents the starting point of the research, I have preferred privately published family histories, diaries, informal snippets of information stored in country museums or in private collections. The extent of these can be gauged in the bibliography, but I need to elaborate on the written settler-derived research base. In the first instance, documents are not numerous and are difficult to come by (Duminy, Honnet and King, 1977). The country museums (Estcourt, Greytown, have cutting collections on families, but these are invariably limited, with the bibliographical information often missing. Personal papers are sometimes to be found in these museums, but again, they constitute bits and pieces rather than a solid evidential base. The museums often have collections privately contributed by amateur local historians. Such collections include sketches of events and people which are drawn in turn from the private sleuthing of the amateur historian. They are generally anecdotal, but do contain important insights and as a whole, testify to the historical consciousness of the midland farmers.

The private institutions themselves are increasingly conscious of history. The major schools investigated in this study all possess archival collections and in some cases employ a librarian or museologist. These endeavours have gained momentum in the recent past as schools try to promote themselves (as historical institutions) in order to woo pupils who are in short supply. Changes in the country's education system since 1994 have made private schooling more expensive and only the very well-off can now afford it. These archives, therefore, while repositories of minutes, headmasters' reports, school magazines and, occasionally, private letters from boys, are now concentrating on memorabilia, such as trophies, flags, and other such artefacts which testify to antiquity and achievement. The good services of Donald Paterson allowed me sight of the early records of Weston Agricultural College. There do exist important private papers in the possession of some law firms. I attempted twice to gain access to these papers, but this was denied. Other institutions have their own collections. The most impressive was that of the Natal Carbineers, whose large and well-organised collection was

35 This figure is for white residents of Pietermaritzburg County (excluding the Borough which had a population of 6085), Isopo, Umvoti, Upper Umkomanzi and Weenen. The total number of whites in the colony was 25 271. The total African population was 362 477 (Natal, *Natal Blue Book for 1880*).

made available to me. The Natal Mounted Rifles (NMR) and Umvoti Mounted Rifles, on the other hand, had papers but these were not sorted or easily accessible. With the assistance of Captain John Hobson, I was able to consult some of the NMR records. Unfortunately, at this time the headquarters where they were deposited, was being renovated. Many of the papers had already been damaged by a process of neglect, there was no finding aid, and much of the material was either not marked or unclearly marked as to date, author, origin or purpose. In the case of the Victoria Club, enquiries about the existence of records drew a blank. The location of agricultural society and farmer association records could not always be established. Fortunately, the Killie Campbell library has assembled a large collection. I stumbled across the records of the Impendhle Farmers Association in the course of interviewing the Blacks of Elandskop. The Underberg records are kept under lock and key in the Underberg agricultural hall, and I did not manage to get sight of them, although I interviewed Des Nicholson at his farm 'XL', in the district. His father had been one of the first presidents, and Des had been secretary for over forty years, starting in 1939 (Nicholson interview, 1992).

In the rounds of my interviews, I found some papers. Not all families have, or are willing to share, such papers but the McKenzies of Cramond, the Blacks of Elandskop, the Pennefathers of Creighton and Gill Tatham in Pietermaritzburg were all exceptionally kind in allowing me to copy their family documents. Amateur historians like Nan Slade and Gill Tatham were similarly generous in sharing their collections. In addition to I was able to get written personal reminiscences from a number of people. My mother, Bridget Rose (nee Forsyth-Thompson), was exceptionally helpful in providing information on my forebears. Rosemary Harper (nee Mingay) and Daphne Pennefather (nee Alcock) provided fascinating accounts of childhood life in their respective families.

In addition to these documents, there are many regional or family histories. These vary in quality and quantity. Some are privately published, others are published by non-government organisations (the Women's Institute, for example, has published many local histories), while a third category are commercially published. Natalians are very conscious of their history and the local publisher, Shuter and Shooter, has published many books which bring diaries or settler anecdotes to a broader reading public.

I made much use of the family histories written by and about the old farming families. Professional historians in this country seem to have made little use of these sources. There are some obvious reasons: they are antiquarian in style, limited in circulation, oblivious generally to historical context or methodological convention. And they discuss members of the ruling class. For reasons discussed above, the ruling class creates and preserves its own history. As history in the scholarly sense, it is poor. It is often self-congratulatory. It omits the distasteful and fashions a tale to suit circumstance. But it is not always like this and many contain moments of painful honesty and humour. As Ronald Fraser (1984) has shown, it is possible to write about the ruling class without becoming part of a smokescreen.

This thesis could not have been written without the sources in the national (but particularly regional) archival collections. Archival deposits include accessions (and some of these have been used), but more importantly, they contain a lot of information on individuals, even though this is often through the filter of their interactions with the state and its officials. Archival documents have been essential in creating a contextual understanding of the institutions and have, in some instances, provided the bulk of information for life sketches (see, for example, that on Duncan McKenzie in chapter 6). In gender studies Connell (1990b, 1991) has suggested that life histories are a most illuminating means of understanding gender identities and relations. His approach seeks to gain a personal account of the experience of power and social reality and depends on exhaustive and immediate interviewing techniques. While these

are not possible for the historian, the approach nevertheless suggests the importance of individual lives in illuminating the broader patterns of social relationships.

Personal interviews were the staple of this thesis.³⁶ The old farming families are very conscious of their origins and history. Their doings were generally outside the state and its various apparatuses. In order, therefore, to understand how that class operated, it was necessary to get inside of it. Benefiting from my own family connections, I was able to conduct over 40 interviews with people who were either members of old families or who were old enough to remember the period covered in this study. Interviewees were drawn from all corners of the midlands (see bibliography). Most of the interviews lasted for at least two hours, though some exceeded four hours. Most were made up of anecdotes, reminiscences and tracing family connections. I was seldom an outsider in these situations and was treated generously. I had many a tea and lunch with my informants. In many cases I have continued and continue to correspond with them, as many are interested in the history that I am writing. Of course there were moments of tension and suspicion too. But these never resulted in open schism or antagonism.

My interview sample was determined by a number of factors. One category of informants I specifically sought out were children or grandchildren of prominent families. Another category was created out of the old family network - I was passed on from one family to the next, or it was suggested that I interview so-and-so who 'knew a lot about the district's history'. A third category can be described as personal - middle class, white Natal remains such a vibrant reality in the region, that it was easy to find appropriate interviewees from amongst the parents and grandparents of my friends, colleagues and acquaintances. An effect of examining a period which began over a century ago is that the informants are aged, ageing and dying. Since I conducted my first interviews in 1988, a number of potential informants died before I was able to interview them. Some died shortly before I was due to interview them, others died after (but not as a consequence of!) the interview. In two of the most unfortunate cases, one informant was gored to death by a bull and another murdered.

The interviews were structured around a prepared sheet of questions, which identified a number of important areas: family; school, sport, old boy and girl societies, politics, agricultural production and marketing; gender and race relations. Conversation ranged far and wide, easily bursting the banks of the interview canal. Initially, I tape-recorded interviews, but I found this ponderous and it certainly inhibited the interview. Subsequently I made notes of the interview as I went along. In the discipline of anthropology debates occur about the interview process and how it might be warped by informants either withholding information or disclosing it in a form designed to conceal rather than reveal. The interview in this context is discussed as being between representatives of the first and third worlds, with the informant having something of value which s/he realizes can be sold or manipulated one way or another to his/her advantage. While this debate alerts to the difficulty of interviews, it is not particularly relevant to my situation. My interviewees did not want anything material from me. Frequently they pressed gifts of home-made marmalade and suchlike upon me. They were interested in what I knew and generally were keen to talk about their family history. Some were concerned about the ways in which I would use information, and in rare cases asked for certain stories to be struck from my record.

Informants were concerned to shape their history and this sometimes, but not always, involved suppressing the disreputable and dishonourable. Some informants were discomforted by

36 Another way of putting this is to say that oral history was a crucial constituent. The origins, purpose and methodology of oral history have been explored, described and explained in great depth. Mostly, the purpose of oral history has been stated as helping "the less privileged" to reclaim their past (Thompson, 1978, 18). My work is self-evidently different in its goals.

questions about homosexuality at school, others were distressed by assertions of racism and labour exploitation. But most seemed very honest and open and there was little that they would not talk about.

I am aware that it is easy to render a bland and innocent reading of the interviews, so I shall run the following anecdote against the grain. I interviewed a couple living on a small-holding in the Dargle. The wife was the daughter of P Davis, Pietermaritzburg printer and frequently the printer for government. When I first made telephonic acquaintance with my informant I got the initial of her father wrong. She was incensed. I wondered why? My reconstruction is that for an historian of Natal to make such a mistake is serious because it casts doubt upon, or indeed negates, a reading of the history of Natal which highlights the importance of such people and hence their descendants. To get the initial wrong was, possibly, to call into question the standing of the family in the region's history.

Section 4 Structure

This thesis is structured to cover six institutions and related activities. These institutions are discussed against the backdrop of the region's history portrayed in chapter 2. Here a survey of the political economy is provided to serve as a backdrop to the histories of the institutions. In this the salience of material conditions is stressed, but it is not the intention of this study to see how material conditions affect gender identity and organisation, at least not in any linear, instrumental way. Class and gender were part of and subject to broader, economically-led societal changes.

The reader is taken along the route followed by a boy as he grows up, showing how masculinity might be encountered in this process and, more importantly, entering the institutions in which hegemonic masculinity is generated. The third chapter, therefore, deals with the boys single-sex secondary schools of the midlands. Apart from being "[c]ompact formal organizations ... (which) have particularly clear gender regimes" (Connell, 1987, 120), the midland schools were elite, class institutions the influence of which went far beyond the school walls and beyond the school years. The fourth chapter examines the influence of rugby, a game introduced into the colony by the private schools. As the sport historian M A Speak has noted sport was not, in Victorian times, a vehicle of social fusion between the classes; rather it served to bring like people together (Speak, 1988).

In chapter five, the spotlight falls on the old boys clubs, the Victoria Club and the Freemasons. Once again, the connection with the elite schools, was strong and obvious. These clubs acted as a safety net for members (men only) and their dependents who fell on hard times. They also were integral to the masculinization of power. Networks, for the most part informal, were given an institutional base within the clubs where they operated to bind and keep men together, to grant public office to men and to make public debates the exclusive realm of men. More than this, they established social codes by which manliness could be ascertained as well as creating and operating a system of social distinction to which colonial men of standing aspired.

The volunteer regiments of the midlands are examined in chapter six. They too enjoyed close ties with the schools. Cadets became universal in the schooling system by the end of our period. The regiments also claimed the membership of virtually all the white men of the midlands, certainly in the period before 1910. These single-sex organisations were highly visible within the colony in peace and war-time, and promoted masculine values which were closely aligned to those embedded within the schools and in the sport of rugby.

Agricultural societies and farmer associations are discussed in the seventh chapter. Here the relationship of agricultural production to organisation is explored. The agricultural societies themselves served to grant distinction and influence to prominent men by allowing such people to assume and, in many instances, to retain office. They were also, however, institutions with rules that regulated procedure, membership and so on. These rules were designed to order the affairs of the societies and to deny access to blacks and other 'undesirable' people. Yet, the rules were also used by individuals and groups to obtain influence which was otherwise denied them - for example, it was possible for women to influence affairs and enter the public domain. While similar agricultural organisations in other parts of South Africa were important in linking farmers to the state, in the midlands their greater importance lay in facilitating contact between farmers and in orchestrating a farmer voice.

The eighth chapter examines the family, the role of women and the practice of inheritance. The focus of preceding chapters has been on men and masculinity. Here a departure from this focus is made. Bearing in mind the observations of Bradford concerning the exclusion of women from history and the argument that masculinity is defined in important ways against the 'other' (women), the place and activities of women will be discussed. Against some arguments which assert the universal subordination of women, it will be argued that they claimed, and were selectively given, important roles within the family. Inheritance served as a mechanism to transfer family wealth down the family line, from generation to generation. While the practice was biased towards males, it was not totally one-sided. Many women had access to financial resources and enjoyed social prestige. These advantages, however, generally attended membership of, and residence within, a family. Women without family had little professional opportunity nor social refuge. Women of the midland families, on the other hand, reaped the benefits of family membership and were hearty supporters of the family.

In chapter nine, the secret history of the old families is probed. The midland families were a class (like all classes) with a manufactured history. In this chapter I examine the ways in which it was possible for them to present themselves to the outside world as a big happy family. This version of their history was made possible by actual exclusions of people from the class. This took its most dramatic form in the disinheriting of heirs born to black partners. The effect of this was to keep the midland settlers as a 'pure white' community. There were other exclusions as well, which involved suppressing the fact of mental illness or class betrayal within the family. Social stigma was a powerful weapon to discipline members and keeping the history pure.

Focussing narrowly on institutions runs the risk of losing the personal flavour of the region's history. The institutions contained colourful characters whose stories are worth narrating. Within all the chapters, therefore, I have inserted anecdotes and biographies. I hope that this makes the thesis more readable, but there is an additional and more important reason for adopting this approach. The biographies show how dense was the nature of settler society. In briefly unfolding an individual history, it can be seen how that person's life straddled many of the institutions discussed in this thesis. Midland farmers belonged to many social institutions, each of which complemented the others. This dense network and the connections it promoted was an essential part of white settler power and settler masculinity.

Chapter 2 The Settlers of the Midlands and the Political Economy of Natal

If you drive northwest along the N1 motorway from Pietermaritzburg, the old capital of colonial Natal, you will pass through beautiful countryside. You will encounter the towns of Hilton and Howick, Mooi River and Estcourt. Along the way, you will see signposts to Balgowan, Curry's Post, Lidgetton and Tweedie. You will be in the heart of the Natal midlands. The country is undulating, with small streams, a few larger rivers and forests breaking up large tracts of pasture.

There is another route you might follow, along the old main road. This deteriorating artery takes you deeper into the midlands. Roads lead away, north and south to Greytown, Underberg or Ixopo, which with Estcourt, mark the corners of a rough rectangle which defines the area.¹ Beyond the highway with its articulated trucks and impatient traffic, life is slower and it is not difficult to envisage farm life in an area which still has very little industry and low population densities.

The midlands is a mixed farming area. It has, in phases, boasted beef, dairy, woolled sheep, horses and wattle as its major crops, augmented with fruit and vegetables. Nowadays, dairy is the major activity. Within the area there are climatic zones and soil types which predispose certain localities to particular productive activities.

The farmers of the midlands are relatively well off. Most of the farms (over 60%) are owned by individual farmers. The holdings are medium sized and are worked intensively.² Farmers cultivate a variety of different crops, have low debt to asset ratios, are well capitalised and use scientific management methods (Bullock, 1994).³ An economic profile of the farmers, however, cannot begin to give an understanding of how the midland farmers live, what their concerns are and how they consider themselves.

As the twentieth century comes to an end, the midlands finds itself in turmoil. Since the 1960s patterns of land ownership have changed. Much of the midlands has been bought by large timber companies and is no longer in the possession of the old settler families. Historically there were not many African-owned farms in the midlands but in the 1960s, government planners declared these to be 'black spots' and set in motion a process of eradicating them.⁴ Africans from these farms were bought out and moved into reserves, often in remote parts of KwaZulu. At the same time, labour tenants on white farms were being evicted. Evictions were particularly numerous in Greytown and the Weenen district (SPP, 1983, 290-1). To

1 Some districts straddle the midlands. The Weenen district, for example, is geographically and climatically divided into two. Part of it is high-lying. Centred on Estcourt it is owned and farmed by white farmers. Its geography, vegetation and climate are classically midlands. The other section, centred on Weenen village, on the other hand is much closer to northern Natal conditions. It is lower lying, hotter, drier and has coarser grasses. Much of this area was, in 1880, occupied by Africans, leasing land from white land owners. These farms, called 'thorn' or 'labour' farms were used as labour reservoirs by midland farmers. The area also had a poor white population. From 1885, after African cultivators had been expelled, small plots were offered to settlers (Burton-Clark, 1988, 145). Later, in 1894 and 1903 two irrigated small-holding schemes were launched for settlers with little capital or agricultural capacity (Weenen, 1929, 5.6). In short, this part of the Weenen district belongs culturally and economically to Northern Natal and will not be discussed here.

2 In 1993, in a survey of Natal farming, a researcher found that the average size of a midland farm was 796 ha (Woodburn, 1993, 33).

3 Natal's farmers (and particularly the midland farmers) have long been better off than farmers elsewhere in the country. In 1972/3, for example, farmers nationally were heavily in debt, but the income of Natal's farmers exceeded their annual liabilities by 10% compared to 4% for the rest of the country (Indicator, 1983). Yet, in the last 5-10 years, along with a general decline in agricultural profitability nationally, midland farmers are experiencing rising debt and liquidity problems (Bullock, 1994, 15).

4 *Afri News*, 34, July/August 1995, 1.

accommodate landless and homeless Africans, the state attempted to expand and consolidate the Kwazulu homeland. Some white-owned land was expropriated in the late 1960s and 1970s for African occupation. The family farm of H.D. Winter (former minister in the Natal government), Loch Sloy, was expropriated and, in 1969, renamed Wembezi, serving as the African township for Estcourt (SPP, 1983, 182). Some thirty farms along the Mkhomanzi river were expropriated between 1976 and 1978 as part of the consolidation of Kwazulu. 21 farms in the Highflats area were also earmarked for consolidation. By 1982 13 had been bought by the South African Development Trust but the entire process was so unpredictable that farmers lived under a constant cloud of worry and uncertainty (SPP, 1983, 152). Settler families resident on the affected farms were forced to move, some leaving farming altogether.⁵ Gradually, as white families leave the land, the critical mass necessary to support small farming communities is no longer available. Small farm villages disappear and sport and social clubs close down (Mingay interview, 1988). A world is disappearing.

It is true that there never was harmony in the midlands. As Perry Anderson puts it, there is always a "silent, social struggle over land" reflecting a "hidden yet ceaseless and restless tension between the rulers and the ruled" (Anderson, 1974, 189). Having said that, there were times, between localized disruptions such as during 1906 (Bambatha's Rebellion) and the ICU period in Greytown (1927-1928), when relative calm prevailed. Today relations between white farmers and black tenants seem generally problematic. The mass evictions of the 1970s soured relations and produced social turbulence. In the mid 1980s Pietermaritzburg became the centre of political struggle between Inkatha and the UDF (later the ANC) (Kentridge, 1990). In 1987-1989 the midlands had the highest number of deaths and 'political incidents' in the region (Bekker, 1992, 45). Many of the refugees fled into the midlands. Some have stayed with family on white farms, others have moved into already over-populated locations. The human pressure on the land and its resources has been augmented by a large increase in thefts and increasing numbers of armed attacks on white farmers. It is often aged farmers who are the targets. Many have been killed.

The days of large, individually-owned farms, and extensive farming methods are over. Farming has become more businesslike. To succeed, one needs capital, a computer, business sense and connections (Isaac interview, 1989). Many of the families who have been on midland farms for five and six generations are realizing that the idea of a farm as family base and point of accumulation rolled into one, is over. This may well be a manifestation of broader changes in gender relations where women are no longer as dependent on men and have career prospects. The gender identity of farmers also appears to have changed. Once they considered themselves as patriarchs. They spoke of having 'children' to look after, meaning their wives, biological children and their farm labourers. Times have changed and this understanding of the patriarch is not accepted by 'the children', nor is it wholly accepted by the farmers themselves. The children in these families are choosing professions in the towns and are turning their backs on the arduous rigours of farm life. They are rejecting the demand that they perpetuate the family line as well as the obligations that go with it. The farmers themselves are much more businessmen now, hard-nosed, under the whip of the economy, with less time or inclination to consider their farm workers as 'their children' to be looked after and morally directed (Marcus and Levin, 1993, 9-10). The market place and political change have sorely dented the day of the patriarch.⁶

The effect of these changes can be seen in the town of Mool River. Once it was a commercial and cultural hub, known for its progressive farmers, its social snobs and its school (Weenen

5 Personal communication, John Black, farmer, Elandsheek, 29 January 1996.

6 Reid (1994) shows how businessmen and labourers in French society, from the French Revolution onward, struggled with the 'rule of the father', reconceptualising it, transforming it and, in the end, replacing it.

County College). Now it is better known for bitter political and labour struggles which have left the local African township, Bruntville, battered and divided. There are no new buildings going up in Mooi River and litter in the street skitters on the cold mountain winds that sweep in from the west. Houses are unoccupied and the Argyll Hotel, once the meeting place of the Mooi River Farmers Association and many other local organisations, is in dire need of custom and a coat of paint. Down the road, St Andrews, the Anglican church built in the years 1902 to 1904, is deserted. Once a place of worship for school boys, farmers and their families, its doors are now locked and bolted shut. There are no longer enough people to warrant holding services. The graveyard is overgrown but still shyly offers a window into the past. The gravestones bear the names of local personalities: Moor, Lawrence, Blaker, Owen, Forsyth-Thompson.

The story is not only one of white settler retreat. The midlands are now being sold to tourists. The Midland Meander has been created to guide tourists from a host of small craft shops to guest houses and pubs. In a corridor from Pietermaritzburg to Mooi River, along the old wagon trails, a new type of settlement is thus emerging. In addition, in the picturesque Dargle valley, wealthy professionals, tired of town life, are buying small plots where they can fiddle with farming and work a half day in Pietermaritzburg or one of the small local towns.

This study is about the midland farming community a century ago, in its adolescence and its prime. It is about a group of white landowners who occupied the land in the second half of the nineteenth century, and retained occupation of that land, in some cases, for a century and more.

Section 2 White Settlers and the Political Economy of Natal

In the 1820s the first white settler-adventurers began to operate in Natal. They necessarily had to reach agreement with local African populations, especially the Zulu kingdom which was at this time emerging. There were good opportunities for trade and hunting and these were vigorously pursued by the small settler population which made its base at what became Durban. In the 1830s, a second wave of white settlers arrived in Natal from the west. **Boers** led by Piet Retief and later Andries Pretorius attempted to establish a permanent settlement between the mountains and the sea. Retief attempted to reach an understanding with Dingane and the Zulu kingdom, but before settlements were well established, war broke out (1838). The **boers** were initially defeated in a number of surprise attacks, but the tide was turned at the battle of Blood (Ncome) river. Having militarily established their claim to the land, the new settlers energetically set about laying out farms and beginning with rudimentary agriculture. The heart of these endeavours was the area centred on Weenen and spreading southward (ie the Natal midlands). But their impact was not to be long-lasting. A dispute with zealous British authority over forced labour policies which the **boers** adopted led to open confrontation, the defeat of the **boers** (1842) and their departure into the interior. For the purposes of this study, the **boers** left behind three important legacies: virtually no trace of their own brief occupation; a land divided up in terms of the principles of private ownership; an area with an insignificant resident black population. When British settlers arrived, they found lands aplenty, cheap and unoccupied. These were necessary ingredients for the establishment of a culturally homogenous, agriculturally-based settler community.

did
people
continue
to live?
after 1842

The colony of Natal was a backwater before 1880. It was neither an important colony of settlement nor the producer of valuable exports. Its government was rudimentary. The development of social institutions was tardy. Social codes, spatial patterns and the fact of white

rule all were not yet rigidly in place. For this reason, some writers have described the area as being a frontier (Marks, 1970, 16).⁷

In the frontier period, gender roles were relatively fluid. Women took part in hunting and trading expeditions, explored and developed a variety of (not necessarily heterosexual) gender identities (Trollope, 1988). As the frontier closed, so powerful forces of conformity came into play. The major one, which affected masculine and feminine gender roles and identities was the state. As Jock Phillips shows for New Zealand, the state considered the existing frontier masculinity (rough and tough) to be at odds with the developmental requirements of the colony and via a number of interventions created a model of masculinity that suited industrialisation, urbanisation and the stabilization of family (Phillips, 1987). A similar argument can be made for race relations, where cross-race unions were initially relatively common (though poorly documented). A well-known example of a settler who crossed the racial line is John Dunn. Born in 1835 in the eastern Cape, he was a frontiersman, explorer and trader. In the 1850s he was involved in the civil conflict that characterised Zulu politics at this time. Later he sold guns to Cetshwayo and was rewarded with land, cattle, office and wives. When he died in 1895, the Dunn clan was numerous, but it was no longer considered to be, or acted as, part of settler society (Ballard, 1985). Few followed in Dunn's footsteps and those that did, were regarded as a problem. As John Laband puts it, colonial officialdom took a dim view of any person who lived 'like a native' (Laband, 1995, 18). South of the Thukela, public cohabitation with African women in the twentieth century was rare, legally restricted, and frowned upon (see chapter 9).

This period covered in this thesis begins in 1880. Around this time, varying in pace according to time and space, settler society was beginning to assume a mature form. Two of the major reasons for this transition were changes in the regional political economy (the mineral revolution) and the growing importance of the imperial factor. 1880, the year itself, was an inauspicious one for the colony. Natal was invaded by **boer** forces. British forces subsequently were routed at the battle of Majuba in northern Natal (February 1881) and the **boers** won the 'first **vryheidsoorlog**'. But in the previous year, the Zulu kingdom had been militarily defeated, paving the way for land-grabbing on a large scale, and easing labour shortages among settlers. In 1880, Natal was on the verge of rapid economic growth and integration into the sub-continent's trade system. These changes were profoundly to affect its society. But there were other important developments around this time. The institutions established in the colony were slowly maturing. The single-sex, boys' schools were just beginning to make their mark. Enrolments were rising and the physical fact of their existence was becoming ever more convincing. Sports (particularly rugby) were beginning to attract participants and crowds and were becoming regular events. Some of the military units had come of age in the 1879 war and were becoming more assertive in the social life of the colony. Farmers associations were beginning to be established. Everywhere there were signs of a change of gear, of a settler society beginning to expand and assert itself.

While Natal followed some of Europe's trends, its institutional history was not derivative. The colony's institutions were frequently marked by debates over the relationship with the metropole, many arguing vigorously for a reduction in dependence and an assertion of cultural independence. At the same time, economic imperatives and social insecurity, pushed settlers to cultivate metropolitan links and even romantically to treasure them.⁸ A large body of opinion looked for direction to the colonial office in London. After Union, Natal developed strong

7 Notwithstanding Legassick's sweeping critique (Legassick, 1980, 52) of the 'frontier thesis' as an explanation for South Africa's race relations, it is helpful to retain the idea of Natal as frontier in the early period. It reminds us of how capitalism (the force Legassick himself identifies as being crucial for the establishment of new 'race relations') later transformed the colony, leading to a more rigid class structure less able to accommodate racial crossings and class deviance.

8 For the first third of the twentieth century, Paul Thompson describes this as Natal's 'British civic culture' (Thompson, 1995).

separatist leanings which reflected the idea that it had a special relationship with Britain (Thompson, 1990).⁹

The trajectory of social change was affected by demographic considerations. In relation to the area occupied and to the resident African population, the number of white settlers was very small. In the colony in 1880, there were 25 000 white settlers, who made up 6.5% of the colony's population.¹⁰ About a quarter of the white population lived in the midlands, including the town of Pietermaritzburg. What was alarming for settlers, was that while their numbers were increasing, the size of the black population (swollen by refugees from the 1879 war) was increasing much faster. For example, in 1876, there were 21 000 whites who made up 8% of the colony's population.¹¹

In the colony as a whole, but in the midlands particularly, the low population density was a factor in promoting marriage and social institutions. The fact that settlers saw themselves as 'the few' moved them to associate with one another intimately and to regularize this process by creating clubs, associations and societies, which in time became the means of monitoring settler society, creating and maintaining hierarchy and the gender and class norms that went with it, and of excluding outsiders. This was not an uncomplicated process. While many acknowledged the central importance of family, many men and women were unmarried. This was because the creation of a family by marriage required levels of wealth which in many cases took some time to accumulate. Thus it was that although men outnumbered women,¹² and women by and large sought the security of a marriage, there were many unmarried women (Beall, 1982, 113). And many women married late. For example, in 1904, in the 16-30 age category, more women were unmarried than married. In the 31-45 year old category, there were six times as many women married as unmarried (Beall, 1982, 213).¹³

In 1880 Natal had a representative, rather than responsible, political system. Government was primarily in the hands of the Lieutenant-Governor and, from 1882, the Governor. In 1893 Natal was awarded responsible government which meant that those with the vote (most white males) could elect members of a Legislative Assembly. No strong political party emerged in colonial Natal. Elections were generally dominated by an issue rather than party political considerations, and the outcome of a vote in a constituency often hinged on personality. The midland farmers, despite not having a political party of their own, were highly influential in government. In 1897 two thirds of those elected were of the 'farming interest'. Although by 1904 almost half the white population was resident in towns, the Natal parliament was dominated by maize and stock farmers. In 1906, five-sixths of parliamentarians were stock and maize farmers, even though the population was becoming more urban (Marks, 1970, 17-18). Of the seven prime ministers (between 1893 and 1910) five were from Maritzburg and the midlands: Hime and Binns were from Pietermaritzburg, Sutton from Howick, Smythe from Nottingham Road and Moor from Estcourt. The last three were farmers, the former two were a civil servant and lawyer respectively, both being intimately connected with the elite boy's schools discussed in chapter 3.

9 Attachment to Britain was also expressed by dogged political opposition to any form, no matter how mild, of Afrikaner nationalism (van Wyk, 1982).

10 Natal Blue Book for 1880, pR10-11

11 Natal Blue Book for 1876, pV4.

12 For example, in 1904, there were 66.3 women for every 100 males (Beall, 1982, 116).

13 Beall's figures here lump white and Indian women together, but indications are that disaggregated, the trend would be little different. In 1904, 37% of all white women were married, 60% unmarried and the remainder divorced or widowed. But these figures include girls under the age of 16 who made up about a third of the white female population (Beall, 1982, 213, 215).

The racial geography of the midlands was of great significance for the capacity of the settlers to develop a class and gender identity along metropolitan rather than indigenous lines. By 1880 Natal's administrators (particularly the influential Theophilus Shepstone, successively Diplomatic Agent to the Native Tribes and Secretary for Native Affairs in Natal from 1846 to 1876) had already decided on a policy of indirect rule which granted ten percent of the land as locations for Africans (Brookes and Webb, 1965, 60). Much of the huge and vacant area left over by this arrangement was bought cheaply by individual speculators and prospective farmers.¹⁴ In the Lindsay family history, for example, it is told that a bag of salt procured a 15 000 acre farm in the Boston area (Fly interview, 1992). In the Nottingham Road area, "a large well-known farm ... changed hands for a barrel of rum! Another, in the Dargle area, was 'swopped' for a theodolite" (Wood, 1947, 61). In 1860, the Natal Land and Colonization Company (NLCC) was floated in London by Natal speculators (Slater, 1975). Intent not on farming but on renting, their intervention gradually caused land prices to rise. Nevertheless most of the early prospective farmer settlers were able to afford large farms. Land continued to be affordable so long as agricultural markets were poorly developed. With the opening up of the railway to the Rand and the improvement of the Durban harbour (L Heydenrych, 1985; H Heydenrych, 1985) land prices rose further. After 1880 settlers wishing to farm either had to have access to capital (and many of the later settlers, called in the Kenyan context by Kennedy, a "migrationary elite" (1987, 6), were in this category) or had to be prepared to take advantage of government land settlement schemes which opened up the less accessible, and climatically hostile areas to settler farming. By the end of the South African war (1902) there was relatively little land that was not yet farmed and plans to settle demobilized soldiers and new immigrants as yeomen farmers (which were envisaged in Transvaal, the Orange River Colony and Rhodesia) were not considered in the midlands.¹⁵

There were not many African locations in the midlands and attempts to gain land through the market met with limited success. White land owners seldom sold to blacks, and the major way in which individual Africans got land was when crown land was opened up for sale. In 1878 Africans owned only 17 366 acres (Lambert, 1995, 73). In that year, crown lands were made available to private buyers. In the next twelve years, white buyers purchased over 500 000 acres. African buyers bought a mere 67 077 acres (Lambert, 1995, 77). This was mute testimony to the difficulty found by African cultivators and entrepreneurs in accumulating or borrowing capital. During the forty year period covered here, some African private land owners fell into arrears and lost their land. Despite limited land ownership (communal and private) the existence of pockets of African settlement which could not be eradicated by military or administrative means served constantly to destabilize settler complacency, giving focus to settler identity.

But the African presence was not just a question of destabilization. Africans were generally subordinate, and often considered a threat, but they were also a constant and immediate presence in settler life. They provided labour but not simply at the beck and call of farmers. African families on the land provided playmates for white children, sexual partners for lustful farmers, care for the aged, companionship for the lonely (See chapter 9). Africans contested the terms of their relationship with the colonisers, they did not just acquiesce (Atkins, 1993). But, as Loudon (1970) reminds us, ownership of land and the instruments of production, the support of the state, access to capital and class and racial solidarity which limited the ability of

14 There is a debate concerning the 'empty land thesis' which Cobbing (1987) argued was a mythical construction to justify white land grabbing. The midlands were not empty, but large areas (mainly the highlying areas towards the mountains) were frequented by nomadic peoples (the Bushmen) and had no resident cultivators. This point is evidenced by the numerous complaints of early settlers about the total unavailability of labour. On the other hand, areas closer to the coast, hosted large African, sedentary populations (Gordon, 1988, 9, 29). According to Hattersley, Africans only began living in the Nottingham Road area about 1860 (Hattersley, 1936, 163).

15 Plans to settle demobilized soldiers after the First World war were implemented, but the only land available was in Zululand (Brookes, 1992) and northern Natal (Arnold, 1990).

Africans to resist exploitation by moving off a farm and finding a *sitplek* elsewhere, gave white farmers literally and figuratively, the whip-hand.

A second major effect of the shape of land settlement was on the cultural form that the settler community came to take. With the exception of some small pockets of land where Afrikaans and German speaking settlers congregated, the area was dominated by British settlement. Settlement spread outward from Richmond, the first area settled.¹⁶ Ironically, it was the smallness of the plots given to settlers of the Byrne immigration scheme of 1849 which propelled settlers to take up land throughout the colony. The small plots were unprofitable and soon were superseded by large farms. The effect of this was that midland families were able to model themselves on a metropolitan squirearchy, quite different from the original schemes which viewed them as sturdy yeomen. Possession of large farms and capacious farm houses became the cultural staple of midland farmers. Their extensive agricultural practices over time gave way to more sensible and profitable forms of production, but not before the image of a farmer riding around his farm on a good stallion observing the labours of his workers, was firmly established as the idea of 'proper farming'.

By national standards the midland farmers were a relatively homogenous group. Yet it is not easy to fit them into conventional economic, rural class categories. They do not, for example, fit into the schema proposed by Verne Harris for northern Natal (Harris, 1992). There, Harris demonstrated the extent, durability and diversity of the *bywoner* class - white farmers working as tenants on the land of white landowners. In that area there were three major categories: landowner, landowner-farmer, *bywoner*. In the midlands, there were no *bywoners*, and only in the late 1920s and early 1930s do informants provide reference to the odd Afrikaner 'tramp' and destitute Afrikaner families squatting on crown land (Pennefather interview, 1992). The British model of landowner, tenant farmer and labourer, also does not apply to the midlands, where labourers were all black, and all farmers owned their land. The same is basically true of Mann's typology for Europe in the 19th century. He divides the agrarian classes into estate farmers including nobles, gentry, or commoners, owning land and employing labour; peasants (smallholding farm proprietors) and landless labourers (Mann, 1993, 694). The midland farmers were capitalist to the extent that they employed labourers (even if the employment was on rent terms), they invested capital in productive enterprises, they geared production to the market and sold their surplus. But they were not just farmers in the 1870s and 1880s many earned much of their money from non-agricultural pursuits such as transport riding. This was very lucrative before railway reached the Rand, and lucrative again during the South African war. In 1883 it was estimated that 15 000 wagons crossed the Drakensberg annually (Lambert, 1986, 80). Many farmers were possessed of capital which allowed them to invest in stocks and shares (many speculated in gold shares) or in the early twentieth century to develop a food processing capacity which, like the sugar millers, united the processes of production and processing and increased profits. They were also a class which actively engaged in farming itself, which is to say that many not only supervised production but involved themselves in it as well (in milking and so forth), though as time went on, their labours were diverted to managing and supervising, and all manual jobs were undertaken by black labour. Midland farmers then, were not cheque-book farmers, with no knowledge of their operations other than as rows of figures in ledgers. Furthermore, they were subordinated to, and sometimes in competition with metropolitan capital, urban commercial interests and rival agricultural interests such as the sugar industry. In the historiography of South African agriculture, they would be referred to as

16 By 1880, the area of densest settlement was along the major route to the interior. The last areas settled were in the south and west, towards the Drakensberg. Small settlements like Creighton (previously called Dronkivlei), and Donnybrook developed only in the late 19th and 20th century as a result of crown land being opened up to white settlement. What became the Poela district was first settled in 1886 but remained unpopular among settlers. It was only with the proclamation of the Underberg Magistrate in 1903 that it began to establish itself. It came to boast the curious situation of two villages, Underberg and Himeville, four miles apart, which rivalled one another for leadership in the area! (Mackenzie, 1990, 11-12).

'progressive farmers'. This term has been used to distinguish the capitalised, large-scale, scientific farmer from the **bywoner**; the under-capitalised, scarcely-commercial, landless cultivator.

The use of the term 'progressive' in South African historiography has also been given political meaning. Progressive farmers were those who favoured organisation, who favoured export and an end to 'semi-feudal' farm relations which tied labour up unproductively on smallholdings. In this sense, progressive farmers were a 'fraction' of capital contesting control of the South African economy with imperial capital (Davies, Kaplan, Morris and O'Meara, 1976). In terms of this theoretical approach, progressive farmers were defined by their relationship to the working class and capital. Since these debates, class analysis has moved on - for some to oblivion, for others to a more subtle, multi-focussed understanding which eschews the economic essentialism of this position. Mann (1993) makes a plea for the abandonment of a unitary focus of class relatedness and identity pointing out that there are other important determinants of class power, including schooling, social interaction and family location (1993, 548). In terms of these other factors, the midland farmers can legitimately be considered as economically, capitalist, socially middle, and politically, ruling class.

The midland farmers **constituted** themselves as a gentry, in the process socially distancing themselves from other classes and races. They employed servants, they patronized civic affairs, they associated with charitable causes, they built grand houses. While many of these affectations were derived from the imagined lives of landed British aristocrats, they should not blind us to the fact that the economic base of such ostentation was not that of huge estates rented out to tenants, but rested on the much more modest strivings of a relatively small black work force working agriculture extensively.

Forces of modernization did not leave midland farmers untouched. Market forces were ever active in forcing farmers to rethink their production processes, to reassess their operations. A role model of modernization was Joseph Baynes, who established himself at Thornville and built his farm into a 20 000 acre block with a variety of food processing plants on the estate. When he died in 1921, his estate was valued at over £300 000.¹⁷ Baynes was the outstanding farmer of Natal (and the midlands), a parliamentarian, a minister of government, an influential spokesman on a range of issues and an innovative agriculturist who (with Dr. Watkins Pitchford (Natal's Principal Veterinary Officer)) pioneered the dipping system which eventually ended the threat of East Coast Fever. Equally, however, we need to note that there were many farmers like him, whose prominence and prosperity were only less spectacular. Baynes's success lay in consolidating his farming and diversifying. He built up an estate of over 23 000 acres with a full time, wage-earning work force of 300. His profits came primarily from his pioneering moves in food processing. He established creameries and a variety of other dairy ventures and bacon factories not just in Natal, but in Rhodesia, Transvaal and OFS (Pearse, 1981, 236).

Not all individually had the wherewithal to diversify or to convert the raw produce of farming into a more valuable, processed product. In these instances, family money or collective endeavour worked just as well. In the case of the Mackenzies of Cramond, the Clan Syndicate was established in 1901 to grow and sell timber (Hayes, 1987). Its foundation members were all related to one another and included Sir George Leuchars (Greytown), Edward Mackenzie Greene of Nottingham Road and two Mackenzie brothers of Cramond (Solomon interview, 1992; Mackenzie interview, 1993; King, 1987, 57). Many of these men were not reliant on one

17 The history of Baynesfield (established by Baynes) is preserved in a private collection housed at the Baynesfield estate, Thornville. It consists of primary documents, letters and some oral transcripts (of the workers who lived there and worked under Baynes). Baynes's biography, based to some extent on this collection, was published in 1981 (Pearse, 1981).

source of income and had interests spread widely. Greene, for example, was a very wealthy lawyer (being in partnership with the future Chief Justice, Henry Bale). George Mackenzie, a close friend of Joseph Baynes, was a director of Nel's Rust Bacon factory. George Leuchars, had interests in, and sold his produce to, his brothers' company, Hunt, Leuchars and Hepburn.

In Richmond a similar circumstance prevailed. Henry, one of the many Nicholsons of the area, was the major merchant of Richmond. He not only provided a most convenient (and profitable conduit) for the family's produce, but he established a canning factory in 1889 with other prominent people of the district: the shareholders were his wife, Isabella, Joseph Harcourt and J W McKenzie (Coulson, 1986, 53-4). Another example was of prominent farmers in northern Natal coming together to establish the Newcastle Creamery Company in 1912.¹⁸ Thus it was that many prominent farmers were also directors of agricultural processing factories: Estcourt MP, John William Moor (brother of the Natal Premier, Frederick Robert Moor), for example, was a director of Natal Creamery Limited and Farmers' Cooperative Bacon Factory (Shorten and Young, 1939, 33). Here were farmers who either processed their own produce or who had direct access to markets via family businesses which placed them in a very profitable position. The issue of markets was also less pressing in Natal than elsewhere because of the dominance and pervasiveness of the family and community networks. Families were not just confined to farms - their representatives were in government, in commerce, in banking. By utilizing personal ties domestic markets were opened to producers. Joseph Baynes, for example, sold his crop regularly to the military (Pearse, 1981, 44). This may have had a lot to do with good price and quality and efficient delivery. It may also have had something to do with his membership of the Victoria Club (see chapter 5) in which all imperial officers were honorary members. There were areas in which this did not work - selling beyond the borders of the colony was seldom facilitated by family connections. Secondly, as the regional economy became integrated and more closely tied into international markets, family clout counted for less. Marketing was de-personalised. Put another way, while midland farmers were well placed in terms of production, local marketing and processing, they could not control and had little influence in the increasingly important national and metropolitan markets, nor could they overcome the basic structural fact of Southern Africa's domestic market, which was that most of its (black) people were self-sufficient and did not need to buy the produce of white farmers (Bernstein, 1992).

Settler agriculture took a long time to become viable. Farming operations were initially pastoral; sheep, cattle and horses. Sheep (first mutton and, in the 1860s, wool) proved profitable and were particularly suited to the colder climes in the south and up against the Drakensberg (Sellers, 1989). Cattle were favoured in the drier northern areas. The Pietermaritzburg garrison, the local military and the slow development of motor transport ensured a reliable market for horses until the first decade of the twentieth century. Before 1860 there was little cultivation. By 1880 sugar had become a viable coastal crop and was being exported but in the interior, the turn to cultivation was slower (Richardson, 1986). Farmers gradually found that pastoralism was, on its own, not particularly profitable. Many resorted to plundering the local resources, first game and then timber, to meet their needs for cash. The natural resources gradually became exhausted, and transport-riding became a popular and lucrative activity boosted by the diamond and later gold discoveries in the interior. The mineral discoveries also provided an impetus to local agriculture. There was not, until the emergence of inland markets, much incentive to switch to cultivation. The domestic markets were supplied cheaply by independent African cultivators (Lambert, 1995, 58), transport was rudimentary, and labour in short supply.

18 A1549, Volume 1.

After 1880, however, a series of developments provided impetus to settler farming. In the first case, the development of large urban settlements in the interior - Kimberley and Johannesburg - had a major impact on the region's economy. On the one hand, the new towns provided new, large-scale and lucrative markets for agricultural produce. On the other hand, the new cities boosted the fortunes of Durban as a centre of trade. The quantity of shipping and trade passing through Durban rose rapidly, doubling between 1886 and 1889 (H Heydenrych, 1985, 33), stimulating population growth and in turn, providing a new, large urban market within Natal itself. The huge imperial military presence engendered by the 1879 Anglo-Zulu war and the 1880-1881 South African war also created a large, though temporary, domestic market. A more enduring effect was that imperial trade connections were strengthened. Natal was more closely linked into the metropolitan trade system. From henceforth, farmers would export their best products to London, would forge business links, would access capital and import machinery and bloodstock (Ballard and Lenta, 1985, 128-131). The accelerated tempo of colonial life was reflected in the expansion of the railway network. Labour was more readily obtained and the colonial state, especially once responsible government had been granted in 1893, began more ardently to support settler farmers. Agricultural exports rose from £849 108 (1896) to £2 485 596 (1905).¹⁹ A beginning was made to the export of processed foods (rising from £1481 (1898) to £54 720 (1899)).²⁰ Farms became smaller and were more intensively cultivated.²¹

Farmers began to diversify their farming operations. Monocropping became less common, with many farmers cultivating maize and fodder crops, as well as running, sheep, cattle or horses. Wattle was introduced by John Vanderplank in 1864 and became widespread after 1887 when George Sutton established its importance as a tanning agent. By the 1890s the Pietermaritzburg-Greytown area was heavily wooded with wattle (Guest, 1989, 319). Dairy farming steadily became the most important farming occupation. The 1880s were years of an international dairy revolution and methods of processing, transporting and marketing improved dramatically. In turn this encouraged the import of pedigree stock from Britain (Gordijn, 1985; Lambert, 1986, 188; Whethorn, 1979). By 1920 the erection of decentralised processing dairy plants throughout the midlands and the increased efficiency of the transporting of dairy products had entrenched the popularity and profitability of dairy farming.

The spread of branch railway lines was vitally important (see Map 3). In 1884 there had been only 173 kms of railway in Natal, by 1908 there were 1588 kms (Duminy and Guest, 1989, 353-4). This put farmers in touch with markets and with industry. All along the main line to the Reef, capital investment, crop diversification and increased acreage resulted. And when rail spread south of the Umkhomazi, areas surrounding Ixopo, Donnybrook and Underberg began to prosper (Camp, 1986; Mingay, ?, 9).

The expansion of agriculture could not have taken place without major improvements in the availability of labour. We do not have definitive knowledge on the sources of farm labour, but a number of speculative comments can be ventured. The destruction of the Zulu kingdom effected by the 1879 war, the civil war thereafter and the land seizures after that, struck a fatal blow at the autonomy of the homestead economy in large parts of Zululand (Guy, 1982). Whether Africans sought land and jobs south of the Thukela after this is unclear, but it is at least likely. The failure of Africans south of the Thukela to establish, via land purchase,

19 Natal, *Report of the Secretary, Minister of Agriculture for the year ended 30th June, 1906* (Pietermaritzburg, 1906), 7.

20 Natal, *Legislative Assembly, Third Session, Second Parliament, 1889, Seasonal Papers*, 9.

21 In the last two decades of the 19th c the number of large farms over 5000 acres decreased from 345 to 310. However, the number of farms larger than 2000 acres increased from 858 farms to 1176, while the number of farms less than 2000 acres, increased from 1859 to 3150 (Lambert, 1986, 173). The number of white farmers in Natal rose from 2167 (1885-7) to 2816 (1900-02) and the number of acres cultivated per farmer in the same period from 37 to 67.3. Natal, *Agriculture Department, Annual Report for 1902* (Pietermaritzburg, 1903), 20.

independent land holdings outside the already overcrowded reserves in the medium term, at least, extruded labour into the farm labour market. Another factor was the determined attack by farmers to prevent absentee landlords from renting land to Africans. Further detailed, discussion of labour relations is offered in chapter 7.

In broad terms, before 1880, farm labour had been difficult to obtain. Wealthier farmers resorted to contracting indentured Indians for agricultural tasks. After 1880, African labour became more available. It came generally in the form of resident labour tenants who worked for three to six months in return for grazing and residence rights. In addition, seasonal labour was obtained from reserves at planting and harvesting time. The practice known in the Transvaal as 'kaffir farming', renting land to Africans with no labour obligations and no independent production enterprise by the farm owner, was not common in Natal. Nor was share-cropping, the practice so popular in the Orange Free State.

The state assisted agriculture consistently, though undramatically. Effort was put into infrastructural development and enabling legislation, rather than direct, 'handout' assistance. Infrastructural development (primarily rail construction) was critical but expensive. Much of Natal's political debate centred on the issue - the routes to be taken, the technology to be used, the expense to be afforded. The state also extended its involvement by providing veterinary services, training (Cedara Agricultural College just outside Pietermaritzburg was established in 1902) and extension services to promote 'scientific' farming.

The other crucial role played by the state was to assist settlement. In the 1880s crown land had been made available to African and White buyers. But this decision was gradually eroded as Africans (the major buyers of crown land) fell behind with their payments and forfeited the land (Lambert, 1988). At the same time, white farmers began buying up that land. In Creighton (Dronkvlei) and Lufafa, in 1895, Africans were cleared off crown land to make way for white settlers (Camp, 1986, 15). The process was further accelerated by the 1904 establishment of a Land Board. The Board encouraged white settlers as long as they had some capital and were the 'right sort' (Duminy and Guest, 1989, 364).

Comparing 1920 with 1880, the following main trends can be noted. Whereas Africans had provided most of the agricultural supplies for the internal market before 1880, at about that time they were overtaken by white farmers (Lambert, 1989, 134). Forty years later, Natal farmers were exporting a wide range of agricultural goods (diary, beef, wool, wattle bark) on a large scale. By 1909 the total area of cultivated land in Natal was five times as much as it had been in the 1870s (Guest 1989, 314). In the same period, the numbers of sheep trebled and cattle doubled (Guest 1989, 317).²²

Section 3 The Old Natal Families (ONFs)

In 1880 there were no old Natal families, no 'ONFs'. Most white settler families had been on their farms for less than twenty years. They were few and far between, unsettled, financially precarious. There was little sense of a farming community, bounded by locale and defined by a shared culture and history. Yet by 1920, a distinct sense of community had developed and by the mid to late twentieth century, this had been converted into the phenomenon of the ONF. Before I return to the theme of the social construction of the ONF, I want briefly to describe the

²² Exports were also promoted by a more conscious approach by the Natal government which began from 1893 to establish a separate Department of Agriculture, and which, after the SA War expanded its assistance and promoted 'scientific' farming and closer settlement.

phenomenon of the midland family, and in so doing, will identify some of the historical actors with whom this thesis collectively is concerned.

To the historian looking back today at the midland farmers, a striking aspect of their history is the length of time they maintained their hold on the land. In many instances, family occupation of a farm could be traced back five generations (a hundred years or more). The viability of their farming operations was testified by this pattern. Midland farmers, unlike many of their colleagues elsewhere in the sub-continent, were also unusually well capitalised (Morrell, Padayachee and Vawda, 1993, 188-189). Midland farmers differed from their inland contemporaries in that there was no powerful mining industry with which to compete or ally (as was the case in the Transvaal), but also, as a corollary, no large urban or industrial market readily available locally. Midland farmers appeared to be politically influential.

Socially, the most important thing about a midland farmer was his family.²³ The family name was what gave him place, allowed him to be recognised. And the family as unit, gave him geographical and social location. In most cases, biological family was synonymous with home. To have a name, meant to have a home, to have a history. As we shall see in chapter 8, family provided a lot more - influence, capital, jobs, friends, emotional support, assistance. For the midland farmer, family was his safe port.

While some of the early settlers came out independently, that is, without kith or kin, others came out in small family groups - brothers together, siblings, young married couples. For those who came out without familial support, the tendency in most cases was for social units (families) to be established early on, testimony to the fact of their utility. Upon this utility was in due course built their social, economic and political significance.

The early settlers came from widely different parts of Britain and from widely different class locations. Most of the Byrne settlers were of humble origin. Only 14% of the settlers who arrived in the early 1850s were self-supporting (Beall, 1982, 107). From that time on, monied settlers or men with public school backgrounds, began to emigrate in greater numbers to Natal. John Daly describes a similar group in South Australia: "Ambitious professionals, younger sons deprived of an inheritance through primogeniture, men of small property, army and naval officers on half-pay and those of 'precarious gentility' struggling to keep up accustomed ways of life as their incomes deteriorated" (1988, 163).

Whether one was of aristocratic lineage or a victim of Scottish highland clearances, it was economically difficult and socially uncomfortable living and farming in the isolated midlands. Most of the settlers retained close ties with their family of origin in Britain, but once in Natal, separate from the emotional and social support, if not the material support, of those families, settlers generally themselves chose to build a family. This was a conscious project - as the biographer of Joseph Henderson noted, "Joseph and Jane Henderson were founders of a family in a new country" (Hathorn, 1973, x).²⁴ The construction of family depended on marriage. Initially this might give rise to a nuclear family set-up, though as time went by, families took on an extended form, frequently involving three generations and including in-laws and distant relatives.

From the start, social ties with neighbours often led to marriage links. "In those days, you married somebody within riding distance", said Phyllis Reed (nee Smythe) (Reed interview,

23 On the whole, I have attempted to use gender-neutral terminology. Here I use the male form, because I am actually talking about midland males. For females family name and family home were important too, though in different ways. Women, for example, changed their names at marriage and mostly adopted the history and identity of the husband's family.

24 Henderson was founder of the Natal Bank and a member of the first Natal parliament in 1857.

1993). While economic necessity was often a major consideration, and biological concern for reproduction another, marriage was not blind to considerations of status. In a society as socially conscious and hierarchical as Natal, great care had to be taken to ensure a good match. In 1864 Pietermaritzburg was described by a British visitor as "the most clique-ridden town it has been my lot to dwell in" (Hattersley, 1938, 73).

The fact that land was cheap, making it possible for virtually all settlers to be land-owners, provided a useful foundation for many marriages. There was an obvious logic in two land-owning families joining together in marriage. Yet there were concerns about not 'marrying below one's station'. Such concerns were articulated initially by aristocrats like Charles Smythe, born in Methven Castle, Perthshire, the son of a Scottish aristocrat. Smythe was taught from early on that "class distinction was something that could not be ignored. Society was divided into rigid castes, and everyone knew his or her place." (Child, 1973, 6). For those whose origins were not as lofty, other devices suggested themselves to conceal working class origin and thus avoid the contempt of town-based cliques who lorded it over colonial society.²⁵ Having a 'good name' became important. A good name could be manufactured.

There were many ways in which a family name could be moulded to convey gentility and to suppress ordinariness. One way was to create a double-barrelled name. Ernest Thompson, my great grandfather and founder and headmaster of Weenen County College, gave all his children Forsyth as a second name, and from there onward, the name slowly evolved from Forsyth Thompson to Forsyth-Thompson. The same practice was followed by another of Dean Green's descendants who created a Lovell-Green dynasty in Nottingham Road.²⁶ In Greytown, the Royden Turners were invented. Walter John Slatter, a Greytown farmer with a huge farm and prominence within many of the local civic organisations (including the Umvoti Agricultural Society (see chapter 7)), married the widow, Evelyn Strickland. She had had a child (Edward Royden Turner) by her first husband, Edward Turner. The child was brought up by the Slatters as one of their own, but retained his name, albeit in the gentrified form.²⁷

Alternatively, one could subtly alter one's surname by deleting from or adding to it. Duncan McKenzie's family had been Mackenzies before leaving Scotland. The O'Farrell's from Ireland became Farrells when they arrived in Natal (to avoid prejudice against the Irish) while Edward Mackenzie Greene (son of Dean Green of Pietermaritzburg) was christened Edward Mackenzie Green but a fortuitous squiggle at the marriage register ensured his distinction (McKenzie, n/d: 1; Pat McKenzie interview; King, 1987, 57).

Finally, one could import distant connections into the family history and given them heightened prominence. The Slatters of Greytown effected this by including as middle names, the family names of Herefordshire gentry-Stanhope and Scudamore (AJS Slatter interview, 1993). The Pennefathers proudly recall their connection with the aristocratic de la Poles (Daphne Pennefather interview, 1992). This was part of a process called the creation of "ancestor myths". These "provided the family with idealized or make-believe pedigrees" (Samuel and Thompson, 1990, 8). For families incapable of disguising their humble beginnings, another option was available - to celebrate humble origins as exotic. Both of these

25 Beall argues that the clique rested on business, finance and banking. Dominy (1988) would add the imperial military. "These groups elevated themselves above the run-of-the-mill artisans, tradesmen, small farmers and labourers" (Beall, 1982, 108). The way in which this elite operated is discussed more fully in chapter 3. David Lincoln (1988) notes that a similar situation prevailed amongst the sugar-barons, most of whom were of humble birth and had similarly to create a history that was worthy of them.

26 Private communication, Robert King, 5 July 1995.

27 In an interview with AJS Slatter (1992), the family history was recalled somewhat differently. Evelyn Strickland's first husband was remembered as a being a member of a "prominent Greytown family". The records of her deceased estate, however, record "no trace" of her previous spouse, "Edward Turner". (MSCE 27440/11938, Estate of Evelyn Mary Slatter).

uses of history confirmed the idea of 'family romance' "in which a make-believe ancestry offers a second identity" (Samuel and Thompson, 1990, 8).

The growing importance of the family name also resulted in names being changed to create distance - to throw the hounds off the foul smell of family fallout. In the case of the Thrash and Thresh families, for example, there was no biological difference between the families at all. The family split into Thresh and Thrash after an acrimonious and unsettled dispute between men in the family!²⁸

If name was important, language was equally so. English was the accepted language of the midlands. In families in which Afrikaans and English was spoken, efforts were made to eradicate the former. Joseph Alcock married an Afrikaans speaker, and his children grew up in the late nineteenth century speaking Afrikaans. He had always aspired for his family to be English and after the South African war, when speaking Afrikaans (the language of the enemy) in Natal became a stigma, he became insistent (Daphne Pennefather interview, 1992).

It was not necessary to suppress the lowliness of one's metropolitan origins in order to be accepted. Being a landowner was generally a prerequisite, but on top of this, there were a number of other points of qualification. Ernest B Morrell (unrelated to me) emigrated to Natal in 1901. He was a plumber by trade and initially worked in a Pietermaritzburg sheet metal business where he later was joined by his brother, Frank. In 1910, having made some money, they bought the only affordable land available at Loteni, deep in the foothills of the Drakensberg. On the farm 'Westview' (1365 acres), Ernest constructed a house and ran cattle. His industry and energy rapidly gave him a place in the new community. He became secretary of the local farmers association and played the violin in the local band at Impendhle. He built a tennis court on the farm and hosted tennis parties for his neighbours. He sent his daughters (he had no sons) to the private Pietermaritzburg school, Collegiate (Morrell interview, 1992).

And yet an internal hierarchy was maintained within the midlands, an expression of instability, an exposure of the shibboleth of cohesive, equinamous midland community. Mooi River was renowned as a "very snooty district" (Green interview, 1992). The district contained many ex-army officers and monied expatriates including Rev Noble, General Lloyd and Major Richards. "There were lots of snobs in Mooi River". Andrew 'Zulu' Green who grew up in the district in the 1910s remembered as his favourite tale, the story of a Natal Carbineers social gathering in Mooi River where all the officers came together and signed the register with their ranks. A local farmer, Jumbo (George) Lund, who poked fun at the district's snobbery by calling his farm 'Effort', came in and signed the register 'private' (Green interview, 1992). Similarly in the class-conscious Greytown area, families like the Slatters and Kimbers considered themselves to be above the town folk, and seldom mixed (Mary Slatter interview, 1993).²⁹

The importance of the family name grew with the influx of settlers, especially after the South African war and the First World war. By then, if not earlier, longevity, became a useful device to establish belonging and distinguish oneself from the *hoi polloi*. In Richmond, this sentiment was expressed by Charmian Coulson, amateur historian of the village and long-standing resident: "[Y]ou need a granny in the Richmond graveyard to be accepted!" (Natalia, 1987, 105). New settlers who were no longer able to obtain land cheaply or easily, took up jobs with little prospect of wealth or satisfaction. Some obtained teaching posts. Employers often rued making these appointments. In a 1921 report of the Weston Agricultural College, for example,

28 Robert King, private correspondence, 11 August 1995.

29 Beall concurs with this assessment: "a characteristic feature of settler society in Natal was the social aspirations of the colonists and the high degree of snobbery which was extended by those who were successful towards those who were not" (1982, 106).

an inspector requested that a teacher, Mr Chapman, "be prompt and not to appear before the boys drunk." The school's logbook for 1914 to 1926 is mute testimony to the calibre of the new settler - many cases of drunkenness, untidiness and incompetence are reported therein.³⁰

As the community began to coagulate through and around a range of social institutions, so a local culture and consciousness began to develop. A strong attachment to the land was asserted and a loyalty to family and to the metropole espoused.³¹ In addition, a local folklore was created around large-as-life figures like the soldier, Duncan McKenzie, the famous polo-playing Shaw brothers, the initiative and wealth of Joseph Baynes, the rigid morality of Maritzburg College headmaster, R D Clark. And it was, of course, fleshed out by reference to local idiosyncrasy, treasured as giving the local culture some specific humanity and humour. Much of this endeavour promoted a self-image of superiority over outsiders (Mewett, 1982).

Section 4 Midland Community and ONF Mythology

It was during my interviews with members of the ONFs that I was struck early on by their presentation of themselves as a community. When speaking about the past, they would automatically move to talk about their family, related families. These would invariably become animated by the injection of familiar family names. With few exceptions, the people I interviewed knew one another, knew of one another, knew about one another. They could often trace family connections. They would frequently recall and recount anecdotes I had heard from other informants.

The reality of community as I experienced it through interviewing, was paralleled in the local jargon by reference to the Old Natal Family (ONF). As an uninitiated outsider I first heard the term used by Jo Beall whose work encompassed the ODFs (Old Durban Families) (Beall, 1982). While I have found no ONF equivalent, a tongue-in-cheek 1994 description of ODFs gives one the flavour.

"Can only be spotted by the public at race meetings and polo matches Their metropolis is England, the counties rather than London, and some even admit to connections with Scotland. They are secretly envious of Old Cape Families."

"There are few entry points for aspirants to the club. Marriage is the most reliable A few outsiders have been known to slip through. Hilton and Michaelhouse rugby matches offer opportunities as well.

"No one is quite sure whether the ODFs are perpetrating their own fantasy of otherness or whether others have invented them as a butt for their own sense of exclusion." (ADA, 1994, 93)

I have not discovered who invented the term ONF, nor when it was coined. In contemporary times, people considered to be ONF know the term, but believe it has a short lineage. Pat McKenzie (of the Duncan McKenzie Nottingham Road clan (see chapter 6)), for example, said he thought the term was only 15 years old, saying that his grandmother used to talk of 'the pioneers' (Pat McKenzie interview, 1993). There was agreement amongst most of my

30 *Weston Log Book, 1914-1926*, housed at Weston School, Mool River.

31 Corrigan and Sayer (1985) argue that the attachment to the metropole was an effect of the state's construction of the citizenry as a 'state elect', a condition which inspired in the inhabitants of England, a self-confidence at being English, which in turn gave the imperial mission its power (194).

informants that ONFs could trace back their emigration to the nineteenth century and that they could demonstrate occupation of a single family farm (preferably) or of midland farms for one hundred years (Fly interview, 1992).

The construction of the ONF as a semi-mythical representation of a social group, rested on the prior creation of community. The Natal midland farming community presented itself as uniform to the outside world. The image was of landed respectability. Such image, of course, concealed the internal dynamics within the farming community which allotted status in terms of wealth, public office, achievement, prominence and family lineage. The process of community construction flattened out differences and created a perception of a united, socially coherent, landed class. Needless to say, the process was dynamic and contested. It was also marked by silencings which were brutal and which bore testimony to the partiality of the ONF phenomenon (see chapter 9). The community could never include, and the ONF phenomenon never encompass, all those who putatively belonged.

The midland farming community took a particular form (closed, relatively cohesive, tight) as a result of the absence of sharp and major class divisions amongst the white population. Unlike most other rural areas of South Africa, the midlands had no poor white population. In an earlier study I conducted on poor whites in southern Africa in the early twentieth century I found that the effect of capitalism and natural calamity in most areas of the sub-continent was to alienate significant numbers of white farmers from the land (Morrell, 1992). This was not the case with the midlands. Initially I assumed, mechanistically, that the absence of sharp class divisions made for a homogenous farming community. I subsequently discovered that this was not entirely the case. The midland farmers did not become a community automatically. Nor was there anything predestined to ensure that they became a community. My research gradually revealed tensions, disharmonies. I could not easily square these with the snug tales of fraternity and unity that many informants generally first presented. The answer, when it dawned on me, was quite simple. The ONFs were both social class and constructed community.

There is no shortage of historical and theoretical literature which demonstrates that identities are constructed. Under the influence of post modern thought, the clear and automatic connection in Marxist literature between class position and class consciousness (or to put it another way, identity), has been severed. It is now generally accepted that subjects or groups have multiple and often contradictory identities. In a pioneering work, Benedict Anderson (1983) suggested that nations (and national identities) were constructed and continue to be so. He argued that specific historical forces were at work in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries which stimulated the production of nations, not just as part of the colonial imperative to make spatial and administrative sense of empire, but as part of the agendas of people who needed some identity to adhere to and believe in. Nations, wrote Anderson, were imagined communities. As part of a surge by left-wing authors to interrogate the base-superstructure assumptions of their work, Marxist historians themselves began to produce work which revealed the constructed origins of tradition and tribalism (Hobsbawm and Ranger, 1983; Vail, 1989). In the context of English history, Catherine Hall has argued that the concept of Englishness should be understood as "a cultural identity, with its own ethnocentric roots and perspectives ... (which) signified (for nineteenth century writers) an identification with an 'imagined community'" (Hall, 1992, 25). Englishness, she argues further, "is not a fixed identity but a series of contested identities, a terrain of struggle as to what it means to be English. Different groups competed for the domination of this space and the political and cultural power which followed from such domination. Englishness is defined through the creation of an imagined community: who is 'one of us'" (Hall, 1992, 26).

Where and when did the ONF myth begin? To answer this I think we immediately need to distinguish between the myth as constructed by 'outsiders' and the myths which were woven into a system of self-representation by the families of the midlands themselves. While these are not in reality distinct, it will be helpful here to analyse them discretely.

In 1888 John Bird, former magistrate for Pietermaritzburg county, colonial treasurer in 1876, and judge in the Native High Court in 1878 published his Annals of Natal. The work, which dealt with Natal's history up to 1845 had been funded by the council of the Natal Society in 1883. This society was initially headed by the lieutenant governor but later (in 1874) became an elected body in which the lieutenant governor could appoint some council members. The society included prominent citizens and senior government members and those considered to be capable of making decisions concerning the cultural direction to be followed by the colony and its settlers (Hattersley, 1936, 11). Although the work did not explicitly deal with white settlement, it was an important starting point for the development of the ONF myth. At the same time as John Bird was working up the early history of Natal (using primarily the testimony of whites), James Stuart was beginning his labours to get Zulu views on society.

It was John Bird's hope that his work would be the beginning of a mighty exegesis on the colonial contribution to the alleviation of the dark continent's burden of darkness. His hopes were in part realised by his son, Christopher John Bird, who became principal under secretary in 1893. In 1896 he took forward the initiative by writing to, and interviewing, settlers who had come to Natal before 1852.

Although he never produced a second volume of Annals of Natal, he popularised his findings in the press. From 1896 to 1914 (at least), Bird wrote newspaper articles (Times of Natal, Natal Mercury) in which he described the great achievements of the early colonists. His articles contain many references to "truly remarkable" men who endured the challenges of the wild and who established commerce and farming.³² The settlers are referred to tenderly as "old colonists" and "pioneers". And in public addresses too, Bird voiced the praises of early settlers and made a virtue out of the length of one's residence in the colonies.³³

The local press were part and parcel of the project to restore to memory the feats of early settlers. In 1905 a newspaper poster entitled "Natal Pioneers" was issued, showing a group of white haired and bearded men.³⁴ The retrieval of historical roots and the veneration of these men should be understood as part of a campaign by the media and politicians for the independence of Natal at a time when the unification of South Africa was beginning to be mooted. Nevertheless, an effect of this was to add to the myth of the ONFs.

When he died in 1922 his vast collection of primary material was left to the Natal Society. Using these papers, Alan Hattersley, professor of history at the University of Natal in Pietermaritzburg, published in 1936, More Annals of Natal. This book covered the period 1845-1875 and began a tradition of Natal self-representation. Hattersley was writing at a time when the political dominance of South African Party (which had stood for ethnic equality between English and Afrikaners) was being challenged by the emerging force of Afrikaner nationalism and the National Party. His prodigious output on regional, white settler history should be seen as a reaction to these developments. His books testified to the specific English character of Natal and implicitly called for its recognition. Within four years, the third volume on Natal's settlers (The Natalians Further Annals of Natal (1940)) had been produced.

32 CPSA, Charles John Bird collection (A421, E1), Times of Natal Supplement, 9 May 1896; (A421, E1), Natal Mercury, 14 July 1914.

33 CPSA, Charles John Bird collection (A421, E3), newspaper cutting, n/d (probably c 1902).

34 Durban Local History Museum. The poster is framed but the source is not indicated.

In Hattersley's writings, there is no clear distinction between ONFs and ODFs. While he is sensitive to social difference, he does little to elevate the inland farmers into a distinct category, bathed in the hue of rustic glory. But the story of early settlement was **about** the midlands to the extent that the Byrne and other settlers had been settled there (at Richmond and York (near Greytown) for example), that the private schools were located there, that colonial prime ministers farmed there. There was no need to make such a distinction - it was obvious.

More recent works have picked up where Hattersley left off. In many of the biographies and family histories, the theme of the ONF underpins the narrative. R O Pearse, teacher, writer and aficianado of the Drakensberg, traced back Joseph Baynes's roots to Donald Bane, eleventh century King of Scotland and, having thus established his claim to aristocracy, describes Joseph's father as "scion of a noble family" (Pearse, 1981, 4).

And in novels, this theme is faithfully carried through by a product of one of the elite midland schools, Wilbur Smith. Smith, a best-selling fiction writer and sentimental defender of colonialism, stability and white rule in southern Africa, embellished in his early novels the stereotype of the handsome, well-bred, adventurous sons and the beautiful, well-bred, loyal (and sexy) daughters of the ONFs (Hall, 1995, 194-196; Maughan-Brown, 1990, 151-154).³⁵

In the journalism of contemporary Natal, these images are perpetuated. Described in a popular 'woman's magazine', *Style*, as "a rare breed", the ONFs are lampooned for their eccentric taste and anachronistic attachment to empire (Clarke, 1989, 96-99). The author writes:

To encapsulate Natal style is rather like pickling the Union Jack ... conservative fragments of colonialism have stuck with an affectionate simplicity bordering on Anglo-Saxon eccentricity ... the elite of Natal seem poised to remain in this post-Napoleonic embrace for generations to come ... They never talk about money and dream of rustic obscurity, secure in the knowledge that their genealogy is embroidered with enough bullion and breeding to see them through the status race.

For reasons which this thesis does not explore, the distinction between midland and coastal variants of the ONF now largely are blurred. The economic and political axis of the region is now firmly centred on Durban. Many of the sugar barons own (or have access to (via syndicates, timeshare or business reciprocity)) small midland farms where they fish for trout, take in the views of the berg, or simply retreat from the hurried life of the city. Similarly, midland farmers have a stake in the life of Durban and Natal's beautiful shoreline, with friends, family and business interests providing the entrée. In short, while politically and economically the midlands are somewhat marginal, its cultural importance lives on.

The self-representation of the midland farmers was from the start bound up with history and geographical origin. The ONFs were a self-contained, small community, whose reference points initially were the aristocracy and gentry of the metropole. They could never hope to emulate at the material or cultural level the lifestyle of this class and so they satisfied themselves with selecting aspects of that class's lifestyle, adding aspects from their own cultural milieu and then fashioning the disparate elements into a cultural whole. This exercise could only be successful because the actual metropolitan aristocracy was not present to make their efforts look pathetic, nor was there an indigenous capitalist class (as there was on the Reef, for example) whose material muscle could actually buy the trappings of culture. It was, therefore, precisely the isolation and closed, self-referring nature of the midland farmers which permitted their cultural project to succeed.

35 For a critique of Smith's novels and an exposure of his political agenda, see Ann Harries, "Pandora's Box", *Southern African Review of Books*, 2, 4, 1989.

Much of this thesis is concerned with the ways in which the midland farmers developed themselves into a community, how they maintained the sense of themselves as a community and how they spread their influence. A comparative sense of these processes is provided by Kennedy for Kenya.

In these communities circumscribed by codes of color, the emphasis was placed on shared values and common station. The diverse origins of the settlers notwithstanding, a sense of social unity was forged, a conviction that gentleman and yeoman, colonial and private, merchant and miner, all had merged into a single, harmonious class. (Kennedy, 1987, 167)

As with the case of the ONF myth, it is difficult to pinpoint the moment of the community's birth as social label or internalised self-description. For our purposes, however, it is important to note a few elements in this process. History was consciously used (and distorted) to order the social hierarchy and disseminate influence. For men like Christopher Bird, the representation of the settler achievement was very important. In 1897 Sir Walter Hely-Hutchinson, Governor of Natal, described Bird's contribution as historian and praise singer for the empire, noting in the context of his conservation of records and artefacts that Bird "was careful to preserve memorials".³⁶ Yet the sense of posterity did not yet exist. The concern for the present dominated, and for those who had their eyes on the future, the concern was for securing it for their offspring, rather than leaving a record of great achievements.

It came as a surprise to me that the private papers of the midland families were actually quite scarce. Some of the scarcity is artificial. In trying to collect private papers from prominent families, Duminy, Honnet and King commented in exasperation that many families placed an "exaggerated economic value" on family papers or were "extremely reticent about revealing themselves .. (to) 'outsiders'" (Duminy, Honnet and King, 1977, i). Their search revealed that "with few exceptions, the papers of almost all Natal's politicians appear to have vanished without trace". (Duminy, Honnet and King, 1977, ii). Similarly, R O Pearse wrote of Joseph Baynes, that he "left behind no relatives and no family, no diaries, and only a handful of letters. His memory almost died with him" (Pearse, 1981, preface). Either little was committed to writing, or what was committed to paper was considered of little importance and destroyed or documents are kept from public view.

This lack of concern with history should be contrasted with the present fascination, bordering on obsession, with the past. There was hardly an informant I spoke to who was not, in some way, engaged with family history. Perhaps the upsurge in interest is a response to the erosion of a system which has for long been in place. The false certainty with its linear projection of progress which gave the settlers much of their confidence is difficult now to sustain. Perhaps the rifling of the family past is a response to the political and economic changes which have infiltrated and subverted comfortable stability. For whatever reason there has been, particularly in the last fifteen to twenty years a concentration of energy in writing family history and recording, whimsically, the days gone by.

In chapter 1, I made a case for the invigoration of settler history by the exposing it to class and gender analysis. In regard to the study of the ONFs as class, I have argued that this will not be interpreted as a strictly economic exercise. Rather I will utilize cultural understandings of class to gain insights into their constitution as class. One way of approaching this issue is to understand the ONFs as community which defined itself as 'belonging', to use Anthony P Cohen's phrase (1982). The feeling of belonging was captured in language and landscape but

36 CPSA, C J Bird papers, (A421, E3), 1897 (article entitled, "The New Government Buildings").

was established through the institutions which are discussed below. This approach accepts the importance of economic issues, such as the relations of production, but moves beyond the comparative literature of previous decades, which reduced questions of settler identity and life, to racial reflexivity. For Kennedy, for example, Kenya's settlers can be understood in terms of racial demography. It is true that the ONFs were white, and that the racial constitution of community was clearly a critical element. But not all their social foibles were instinctive recoils on apprehending the black other. Settlers were not uniformly racist, nor opposed to sexual and/or social interaction. In the nineteenth century, at least, the points of contact between white settlers and indigenous Africans were not insignificant. But as the ONF institutions gained force and the colonial state matured, so the definitions of community, family and class ossified and became closed and excluding. It is this process that this thesis examines.

The men of the midland ONFs can be presented as essentially evil, manipulative, exploitative, domineering. They can also be understood as gendered members of a class who, if we take the description of childhood offered in the Cullinan poem in the preface were subjected to the angers, arbitrary displays of power and humiliations of their seniors and experienced the sorrows and discovered their frailties in the process.³⁷ As I have demonstrated in chapter 1, men are not bound together by a common, natural masculinity. Rather a hegemonic masculinity exists which is taken to be (and presents itself as) the masculine essence. It silences other masculinities and prevents critical exploration of masculinity as social construct. If we work with this understanding, then my approach to the ONFs should be understood not as a plea that they get special consideration. Nor should it be regarded as a humanist demand that the ruling class be treated 'just as people'. Rather it should be understood as an insistence that we examine the acquisition of identity, and accept its social constructedness. And acknowledge too, how the uncertainty of this process produces fragility and how this in turn impacts on the gendered ways in which classes construct and reproduce themselves.

refers to 1904

³⁷ A similar point is made by Yvonne Brink in her discussion (1993) of the diaries of a ruling class couple in the Cape. She argues that diaries can expose the inaccuracy of colonial gender stereotypes. She found that the portrayal of the husband as a dominant male is exposed by the diaries which reveal him as insecure, undermined, and ousted from important spheres of domestic and public life.

Chapter 3 Masculinity, Friendship and the Boy's Secondary Boarding Schools

In 1863 Maritzburg High School, later known as Maritzburg College (MC), was established as the first government secondary school in the Colony. Less than ten years later (in 1872) Hilton College was established by a teacher, Rev Orde Newnham, as a secondary school for the sons of gentlemen. These two schools, along with Bishops College (which became Michaelhouse (MH)) and Weenen County College established the midlands as the educational heart of the colony. This is a claim that the region still makes to this day.

The schools were primarily boarding establishments exclusively for white boys. With some exceptions, they drew their pupils from the most affluent sections of the white population. Many of the 33 foundation scholars of Maritzburg High School, for example, were from prominent city families: lawyers, journalists, senior civil servants, businessmen (Haw and Frame, 1988, 20-21).

Government's involvement in education was constrained by budget difficulties and much of the initiative was left to private individuals or religious orders. The school system was slow to develop. The first high schools for boys were established by an 1861 law in Pietermaritzburg (1863) and Durban (1866) respectively. These as well as the private schools were built and administered according to the English public school model.

At about the same time as secondary education was being provided to a small number of settler children in Natal, major changes were taking place in European education. Schools were brought into a relationship with one another and with the occupational structures existing at that time in a new, systemic way. In this process (lasting for about half a century from 1870 until the First World war) a system emerged which was tightly and hierarchically structured. Its social effects were to perpetuate social inequalities and class structures. The contradictory and uneven emergence of this system and its effects has been the subject of a sophisticated and convincing analysis (Müller, Ringer and Simon, 1987). Surprisingly, that analysis makes no mention of the power of this new education system to entrench and disseminate gender values and relations.

Michael Mann (1993) builds on the work of Müller et al (1987) in discussing changes in the composition of classes and the rise of Europe's nation-states. At the turn of the century the middle class of professionals, small businessmen and bureaucrats, was a rapidly expanding class which "demanded political citizenship and ideological citizenship" (Mann, 1993, 571-2). The schooling system was expanded and segmentalised as a result of the state being responsive to middle class demands and as a consequence of the middle class's own energies being invested in education. The middle class depended increasingly for its wealth on formal education, whereas the working class and capitalists did not. Education gave the middle class an undeniable claim on citizenship. It allowed the class to become gender-integrated (girls schools were also established) and to distance itself from peasants and workers.

In colonial settings, education was an integral part of social engineering. In the Transvaal, compulsory education was implemented for whites in 1907 as a way of tackling the related problems of increasing white poverty and the need to maintain race prestige against the black majority (Chisholm, 1984). In Southern Rhodesia a similar policy was followed, though the

Use for history workbooks

ethnic divisions between English and Afrikaans speakers were significant (Challiss, 1992). In Australia access to education was extended in the 1860s as reformers became concerned about social order and waifs turning to crime and cluttering up the streets (Gilding, 1991, 18-19). This resulted in a huge expansion in the school-going population. What is common in these experiences is that education was a site of contestation and that the form which it took mirrored the specific matrix of colonial power giving settler elites privileged access to schools. Those excluded or denied partial access belonged to marginal social groups, the working class, the colonised, or in general terms, those outside the ruling bloc.

The schools were complicit in constructing male dominance and hegemonic masculinity within the colonial order in three distinct ways. They operated as a network for a settler gentry to dominate the colonial, commercial and agricultural order. Boys from these schools, particularly as time went on, kept in contact with one another and helped one another. They became magistrates, judges, lawyers, businessmen, politicians, ministers of state, colonial and later provincial administrators. The schools played a major role in masculinizing the colony's structures of power, and in the process, pushed women into the public and political margins. Secondly, the schools were the cradles of masculinity. From within these schools emerged social values which were spread by the masters and boys of these schools. In this latter sense, the concept of a 'defining institution' developed by Hilary Steedman (1987) in the context of the British public school system is extremely useful. Steedman argues that the public schools were "invested with the authority of the state because their former pupils dominated both government and administration" and that, via indirect control over the curriculum and powerful prescriptions about school organisation and ethos, they were able to "define all other components of the secondary system in their own image" (Steedman, 1987, 114). Unlike in Britain, where the connection between the public schools and access to Oxbridge were most important, in Natal entry to university was not critical. The University of Natal was only founded in 1910. Natal's elite boarding schools were powerful for symbolic rather than functionally educational reasons. They were signifiers of settler values. They were bastions of civilization against the imagined threat of octopus-like black barbarity.

managing masculinity

A third key contribution of the schools was their impact on personal relationships. Gender values were not produced by some mysterious or impersonal force. The repetition of gendered tasks, themselves predicated on entrenched hierarchies was one way in which a particular reading of masculinity was created by the institution. Another, equally important, contribution to school masculinity derived from the complex relationships between the people operating within the gender regime of the school. The relationships between masters and boys, between prefects and juniors, and between the boys themselves all impacted on the received masculinity of the institution. The boys were not obedient choristers of an existing gender order. They actively contributed to the creation of masculinity. Boys operating in a gendered context accommodated themselves to some of its constraints, challenged and defied others. In trying to deal with the 'toughening' processes of school life, boys developed forms of social organisation including gangs. It was within these groups that boys interpreted, reflected and occasionally challenged the hegemonic masculinity of the institution.

Section 1 The Development of an Education System in the Midlands

Before 1880 education was provided sparingly and unevenly for the children of settlers. In the more densely farmed areas there were private farm schools as well as a few small boarding schools. These were often of poor quality, being run by people without educational training and for financial rather than pedagogical reasons (Hattersley, 1936, 226-231). For children either

in geographically isolated locations or from families with serious educational aspirations, private tutors provided further education. In the two main towns, government had provided education from as early as 1849. But there was no "coherent system" of education (Behr and Macmillan, 1971, 10). In the 1860s and 1870s secondary schools began to develop in response to concern by parents and government.

The development of a schooling system, specifically secondary schooling, was the product of a number of diverse factors. From the government's side, the civilizing mission necessitated the raising of the educational standards in the colony. Amongst the settler population, attitudes towards education differed widely. There was no direct link between education and job opportunity at this point, so education's importance lay in other areas. For the ONFs education was becoming an important site of class affiliation. In 1880 it was still possible to enjoy status on the basis of land ownership and duration of residence in the colony, but the increase in white population made it an important class project to erect borders of class exclusivity. Other attributes were consequently added as necessary criteria for admission to the ranks of the gentry. One of the foremost was secondary schooling.

To understand the importance of schooling, we can employ Pierre Bourdieu's concept of cultural capital. Children were sent to school to get cultural capital. This particular form of class-based advantage is distinguishable from other forms of capital such as economic and social capital. Cultural capital in one of its forms

is cultural 'background', a relationship to the dominant culture that is passed along by the family. If those who inherit this form of cultural capital enter the school system, they have a very high chance of obtaining valuable credentials, which in turn will give them access to favourable occupational and social positions. Thus educational credentials largely confirm and certify family background; but they also constitute a new and highly convertible form of cultural capital. (Müller, Ringer and Simon, 1987, 4)

One cannot simply read off from these governmental and class imperatives the form that secondary schooling came to take in Natal. Yet, on the other hand, it was not a coincidence that secondary schooling was initially delivered by schools closely resembling the British public schools, nor that their form and institutions came to define the model on which secondary schools were later developed in Natal.

For Natal's education administrators the English education system was the model. In the towns boys' and girls' model primary schools were established to provide elementary education to the broad bulk of the urban population. While this included some African and Indian pupils, these were the exceptions (Harley, 1994, 38-40). At the secondary level, conceived by definition as elite (few children reaching this level), the public schools were the source of inspiration. Maritzburg College catered for townfolk initially but soon developed a boarding establishment which served the influential farming constituency of the midlands. Boarding schools had been introduced in England to deal with unruliness amongst the school-going children of the aristocracy. This and other features of the reformed public school system (including organised sports, prefects and a classics curriculum) became regarded as sound administrative and procedural features of secondary schools and over time became valued as crucial in making men out of boys.

ONFs believed that a 'good' secondary education was essential for boys. If one could afford it, one's children were sent to an English public school like Lancing, Haileybury or Uppingham. British education in this period was beginning to open doors into professions hitherto dominated by the aristocracy. The Cardwell reforms in Britain in the 1860s and 1870s ended

the practice of purchasing military commissions. This opened up the army as a career opportunity to the new middle class. The same was true for the civil service. To provide the men of this rising class with the requisite values and ambitions, good secondary schooling became essential. Thus the connection between schooling and a career, hitherto weak, became strong, particularly for ambitious young men. Natal's colonial service was not large but its pay was good and it was far and away the largest employer of the white middle classes. A place within it depended on education or family connections. As time went on these two entrance requirements merged.

ONFs were prescriptive about the gender component of the education offered to their sons. There were competing definitions of what it was to be a man. From the gentry's point of view, the crudities of the white working class and the lack of sophistication in African conceptions of manliness made it important to develop a distinctive reading of masculinity. These concerns mirrored changes in the metropole. In the late Victorian period definitions of masculinity changed from emphasising earnestness, selflessness and integrity to stressing Spartan toughness (Mangan and Walvin, 1987). The change was captured in the expression 'muscular Christianity' - a description which became synonymous with the public schools of this period (Mangan, 1981; Mangan, 1990). In line with metropolitan trends, the parents of school-going boys in Natal insisted upon or accepted the development of institutions which in turn reflected this gender imperative. The secondary boarding schools became places where boys were toughened into men.

Section 2 The Secondary Boarding Schools of the Natal Midlands

Maritzburg College was unable alone to meet the needs of settlers for secondary education. In 1869 provision was expanded when Hermannsburg missionaries opened a boarding school at Greytown. It immediately drew off many of MC's pupils, demonstrating the local preference for boarding establishments. In 1872 Hilton College just outside Pietermaritzburg opened as the first private secondary boarding school. By 1875 73 pupils had enrolled (Haw and Frame, 1988, Ch 1).

Sending a boy to boarding school was expensive and only a small proportion of settlers initially was prepared to make this outlay. In 1880, for example, MC charged 50 guineas a year and had only 34 boarders.¹ The Maritzburg College Register for the 1880s and 1890s shows that many boys left school to "go farming", presumably when finances back home got tight. At this point, MC was functioning primarily to service the growing colonial bureaucracy and the professional and commercial classes. While some of the boys entering the professions were from the midlands, the bulk were from the resident urban population of Pietermaritzburg.²

The schools may, for analytical convenience, be divided into three groups. The two oldest schools, MC and Durban High School (DHS), resembling English grammar schools, commanded a special and prestigious place in the secondary schooling arena of Natal (Randall, 1982, 11). A second category consisted of the private schools of Hilton, Michaelhouse and Weenen County College. Together these two categories constituted an elite - as MC boys made clear. They described "low class fellows ... not attending College, Hilton, Michaelhouse or DHS" as "borvers" (Haw and Frame, 1988, 231).

1 ED, 1/1/14. 1/1/1. Council of Education Minute Books, 3 June 1880 Ordinary Meeting, p.120.

2 Maritzburg College Museum, Pietermaritzburg High School and College Register.

Hilton College was established in 1872. In the words of its first headmaster, Rev William Orde Newnham, "his first and greatest desire was that 'Hilton boys' should be synonymous with 'gentlemen' in the very best sense of the term, a boy who was honest and upright and true as steel" (Nuttall, 1971, 6).

Michaelhouse was started by the Anglican church in Natal in 1896. It was built along the lines of Eton and Winchester to "promote the idea of a learning community" (Randall, 1982, 19). Its headmaster initially had to be a man of the holy orders. James Todd, the first headmaster, believed that classics and maths were essential for "producing men of understanding, thought and culture" (Barratt, 1969, 13). On the other hand he had deep disdain for applied subjects like shorthand and bookkeeping and was deprecating about the manners and demeanour of some of the 'colonial boys' (Barratt, 1969, 15).

Weenen County College began in 1902. It was situated in the heart of the midlands close to Mool River. It was geographically the most accessible of the private schools and consequently attracted pupils from all the premier families in the neighbourhood. By 1910 it had a complement of 100 boarders and was playing rugby and cricket against the big four, MC, DHS, Hilton and Michaelhouse. It was owned and run by Ernest and Katharine Thompson and had no financial assistance from the church or old boys. It relied heavily on local support. This it received. The local senator, addressing the prize-giving in 1913, said that "the people of Weenen County felt a kind of proprietary interest in the School." At the end of 1916 it closed when most of the staff and many of the senior pupils went on active service (Forsyth Thompson, n/d, 10; Green interview, 1992).

Before turning to the third category of school, it should be noted that the elite secondaries in time generated a demand for good primary ('preparatory') feeder schools. These either pre-existed, in the case, for example, of Merchiston in Pietermaritzburg (established in 1892), or were created specially. Cordwalles was set up in 1910 by the Anglican church to send well-prepared boys to Michaelhouse (Barratt, 1969, 49). This trend mirrored developments in Britain where primary schools began moving away from 'domestic education' to consciously providing the social and educational prerequisites for entry into the public schools (Honey, 1987, 153). This powerfully reinforced the ability of the elite secondaries to operate as defining institutions.

A third category of secondary institution was the government schools created after Natal had become part of the union of South Africa. These included Estcourt, Greytown and Ixopo high schools, established between 1917 and 1919. Although they were not pretentious they followed the pattern set down by the elite secondaries. They adopted the house and prefect system and competed determinedly in sports. From time to time under exceptional headmasters, they challenged the pre-eminence of the elite secondaries in sports or academics. By this time secondary schooling was recognised as important by the gentry at large. The move to scientific farming spurred farmers to send their sons to agricultural colleges (like Cedara) for which a secondary education was needed. Yet agriculture remained marginal in terms of profit, and many families could not afford to send some or all of their children to the more expensive elite secondaries. This breach was filled by the rural government high schools (Greytown Schools, 1983?, 13, 43; Ixopo High School, 1965?; Pearse, 1946; Haw and Frame, 1988, 231).

The government secondaries were an important locus of education in the midlands. In some cases they were the result of local lobbying by prominent families, members of parliament and civil servants (frequently the resident magistrate). The Moors, for example, a powerful family in Estcourt which supplied Natal's last prime minister and a host of influential politicians and farmers, had a hand in the creation of the schools at Estcourt and Mool River (the Weston

Agricultural High School, opened in 1914). These schools were not designed for the gentry. J W Moor, a major mover in the establishment of Weston, had in mind a school for "boys of poor parentage who were being set adrift into the world with no proper training or education."³

The status of schools changed over time. When secondary schooling was in its infancy, it became a way of maintaining a tight link between the old, established families who by and large patronized these institutions. As time went on and rural settlement grew more dense, it became necessary for the ONFs to admit newcomers into the fold. This occurred via a number of different mechanisms, including admission into the elite secondaries. In addition, the financial need of the schools themselves to take in more students diluted parochial exclusivity. The influx of a new class of immigrant (upwardly mobile, single, male, public school products of Britain) meant that the schools began to take in pupils from a wider social pool. In the twentieth century the pool widened even more so that the children of wealthy Transvaal capitalists began to become a major constituency. In this process, the elite secondaries became the defining institutions of Natal schooling.

The power and influence of the elite schools derived in large measure from the fact that they were boarding schools, generally situated in geographically remote areas. The boys lived with their peers and the school masters for much of the year, broken up by four holidays, occasional long weekends and an enforced Sunday outing when they were obliged to 'explore' beyond the bounds of the school.⁴ The parents were at ease with the idea of sending their sons off to school as early as age seven and expected them to be there for up to ten years. In this context, the school became a critically important part of growing up. John Honey, a scholar of the English public schools, notes that a boy's experience here was total and created "an atmosphere of intense communality, capable of generating powerful emotions associated with the school itself" (Honey, 1987, 155). Loyalty for the school was built upon loyalty to one's house, to those in authority over one, to one's friends, to one's sports team. In this environment loyalty involved putting team before self. Team spirit became an important part of hegemonic masculinity, and was reflected in intense association with masculinist institutions such as sports clubs, military regiments and old boys' societies, and loyalty to class and gender sets.

As has already been indicated, the growth of boarding schools was slow. In the rural areas, schools only began to operate effectively in towns once the railways had linked them to the coast and the interior or, as R O Pearse puts it, once "the unsettled life of a frontier town was giving place to a more ordered existence" (Pearse, 1946, 9). By the turn of the century, demand for schooling exceeded supply. Part of the growth in the school population has to do with simple demographic processes, but another factor was also beginning to play a part. The farming community in Natal was beginning to push up against the natural limits of land holding. The most remote corners of the midlands, Underberg, were being occupied in the 1890s, but elsewhere families began to realise that large families meant that not all the offspring would be farmers. The whites-only civil service with its preference for educated, old school products and the ranks of professionals and business people, drove home the message that an education at one of the elite schools was a worthwhile investment. From 1900, therefore, with dips caused by financial downturn and the varying fortunes of the different schools, the number of boarders at the schools in question rose and remained high. Such was the demand that new high schools, with boarding establishment, (the physical extensions of the government secondaries mentioned above) opened at Greytown (1923), Ixopo (1925) and Estcourt (1927).

3 *The Harvester Newsletter of Weston Agricultural College*. 1, August 1984. I would like to thank Mrs Moira Tarr for her assistance here.

4 Such boarding schools have been described by Andrew Tolson as "an upper middle-class extreme" which transmitted, as a sanctioned part of their experience, a notion of 'manhood', which remained the ideological reference point of the training of 'gentlemen' (Tolson, 1977, 34-35).

Section 3 The Masters and their Pupils

The ideals of the English public school system took root in Natal primarily via the exportation of its old boys to the colonies. From the outset Natal's schools were staffed by men from Britain, normally public school boys. There was a chronic shortage of locally trained teachers and it was necessary to obtain teachers from overseas.⁵ But there were forces at work other than those of necessity. Natal's council of education stipulated that headmasters of DHS and MC should have a degree from an Irish or British University. Michaelhouse had a similar rule and Hilton and Weenen County College seemed to have preferred such appointments.⁶

Maritzburg College's first headmaster (discounting its initial hesitant opening spell before it moved to its present site) was R D Clark (1879-1902). He was a graduate of Edinburgh University and New College, Oxford. Apart from his educational background he was well connected, having married the daughter of a former governor of Madras. He was also a prominent freemason (see chapter 5) and, via the marriage of his sister, connected to the extensive Gold family, well-known farmers in the southern midlands. His deputy was also an Oxford graduate. His successors, E Barns and S Pape, were both public school and London University and Queen's College, Oxford, respectively. At the turn of the century, MC began to employ local teachers. Amongst the most outstanding were C T Loram (1897) and Alan Paton (later in 1928). Loram, became in the 1920s an important spokesperson for liberal ideas of segregation. He served on the Phelps-Stokes Commission on African Education as well as the South African Native Affairs Commission. Paton became internationally famous for his novel, Cry the beloved Country, but was also important in national educational circles for his work at the Diepkloof reformatory near Johannesburg. By the 1920s, MC had abandoned the tradition of preferring British graduates and was employing instead proven local pedagogues (Frame and Haw, 1988, 85, 156).

Hilton was much the same, its first five headmasters, who ruled up to 1930, were all British graduates. The founder, Newnham, graduated at St Johns College, Cambridge. His successor, Henry Ellis, was a Rugby boy and Cambridge graduate. His two assistant masters were from Exeter College, Oxford, and Eton College and Cambridge. Under Ellis (1878-1904), the influential views of Rugby's headmaster, Thomas Arnold, were implemented. Prefects were appointed and given great powers, rugby the sport was entrenched, the school's colours, emblem and motto were modelled on those of Rugby and the entire system was "based on authority and tradition".⁷ William Falcon, (1906-1933) went to a public school and then to St John's, Cambridge. He taught at Charterhouse and was a member of Milner's Kindergarten in 1902. In 1909 the Hilton staff included three teachers from Cambridge, one from Oxford, one from Glasgow University and one from the Royal College of Science, Dublin. Hilton began employing local graduates much later than MC.

Michaelhouse, too, had a strong connection with Rugby. Its predecessor, Bishop's College in Pietermaritzburg, was headed by C C Prichard, curate at Rugby and Oxford graduate. Its first headmaster was a public school boy and Glasgow and Cambridge University graduate. He was followed by Canon E B Hugh Jones (1903-10) of Marlborough and Jesus College, Oxford. The following three headmasters were all public school products (Uppingham, Blundells and Charterhouse) and all were Cambridge graduates. A W S Brown (1910-16) was not unusual in his approach which "unhesitatingly put character before intellect" (Barratt, 1969, 52). At

5 ED 1/1/2, Council of Education Minutes, 26 April 1889, p3.

6 ED 1/1/14, 1/1/1 Council of Education Minute Books, January 1878-June 1888, p6; Haw and Frame, 1988, 10.

7 Nuttall, 1971, 15. For the influence of Arnold, Rugby and the British Public schools more generally, see Mangan, 1985.

Weenen County College, the headmaster, Ernest Thompson, schooled at Haileybury (his brothers went to Marlborough) and graduated at New College, Oxford.

Although headmasters invariably put their stamp upon the schools, they were not alone in doing so. They tended to assemble masters whom they felt could carry out their mission. Many of these teachers, while sound academically, were "tyrannical in the extreme". Alan Paton, as a MC schoolboy, remembers that "he forgot the Latin for 'to carry' and was made (by Sarky or Sucky Sutcliffe, the Latin teacher) to go on all fours and carry books from one side of the classroom to the next" (Haw and Frame, 1988, 191). Sutcliffe had a drill sergeant way of teaching and beat boys regularly with a heavy wooden pointer to ensure memory. Pape, headmaster and teacher (1926-1937), ruled with his cane and was regarded by some as a "rude, noisy bully". He saw his task as to instil discipline and resuscitate the school. Boys disliked him for being unfair and "anything but evenhanded in the justice he so liberally meted out" (Haw and Frame, 1988, 248-250). He beat pupils one cut for every punctuation mistake. In other cases he beat boys until an answer to a question in class was forthcoming. He also had the habit of caning an entire class either for good measure or when failing to find the culprit of an offence. But if there was a teacher who chillingly conjured up the educational spirit that pervaded these schools it was Carpenter, Pape's right hand man. He was not a graduate (which probably accounted for his miserable attitude) but had taught at Michaelhouse before teaching English at MC.

A lonely, remote bachelor He struck real terror into the hearts of the College boys and few would dare pass his lair lest an unguarded cough bring forth the rod-bearing master. Carpenter used to hate boys watching him eating and if he detected anyone watching him, summary justice would descend. As a result of this, the boys sitting closest to the High Table used to sit with their faces virtually immersed in their food. (Maritzburg College Museum, Display caption)

In our period the number of midland boys at the private and government grammar schools grew steadily. Efforts by the state to facilitate this included reduced rail fees and the erection of boarding houses.⁸ Nevertheless the process was slow. At Hilton, for example, it was initially only the sons of the most prosperous families - Raw (Impendhle), McKenzie (Nottingham Road), Foster (Ixopo) - who were sent. By the early twentieth century, however, the membership of the old boys' society began to reflect the growth of the pupil pool.⁹ MC began to take in ever larger numbers of boarders (many from the midlands, the major feeder area). In 1888 24 out of 96 boys were boarders. By 1890 boarder numbers had risen to 60. Although it became accepted that boys should have some secondary schooling, the sons of farmers frequently exited the system after Standard 6, or when family money ran out. Matriculation was not regarded as 'necessary' and when things were tight on the farm, boys were expected to forsake their studies and return home to work.¹⁰

I have argued in this section that the elite secondaries assisted the Natal gentry to construct class and gender identities. It became expected that prominent families would send their sons to one of these schools, and in many instances sons were sent to all three, depending on the

8 ED 1/1/1, Council of Education Minute Book, Meeting 7 February 1878, 12.

9 Between 1902 and 1906, the Minutes of the Meetings of the Old Boys Society show that Midland locales were increasingly providing the school with pupils. A full list of all members of OHS in 1901 shows that out of 207 Old Boys, 54 came from the Midlands, and a further 37 from Pietermaritzburg (*The Hiltonian*, 1, 1, September 1901, 28-29). The same is true for Michaelhouse. 67 per cent of boys in 1917 were from Natal and Zululand. Michaelhouse Archive, Report to Synod, July 1917.

10 Nevertheless there was a general increase in secondary scholar numbers. In 1921, MC peaked at 386 (Haw and Frame, 21, 106, 113; Daphne Pennefather interview, 1992).

financial position of the family.¹¹ Yet it should be emphasized that the elite schools acted more to exclude than to include. While the ranks of the gentry were gradually swelled by the products of these schools who remained in Natal, the vast majority of boys remained outside the charmed circle. Black (African and Indian) children were never admitted. The children of the less prosperous (most notably working class white boys) were not admitted either - for these were the days of little financial assistance being offered to attend the elite schools, and where it was offered it was given to the sons of old boys. And yet the restricted admission of boys into the schools did not prevent them exercising great weight on colonial readings of masculinity. Precisely because the elite schools and their products defined masculinity, their influence reached every corner of the settler world.

Section 4 School Experience and the Construction of Masculinity

There are many ways in which one could begin to unravel the construction of masculinity in schools. J A Mangan (1985) in the context of British public schools, has shown how important the sporting system and the house and prefect systems were. In this chapter the focus initially shall be on the harsh elements which were central to the construction of 'muscular Christianity' and were consciously inserted into the system. Teachers believed that it was necessary for boys to be beaten, to undergo hardship, in short, to be toughened.

A rare and revealing punishment book will serve to introduce the subject of school punishment. "A Record of Corporal Punishment - College, 1888-1918" included the prefatory note "NB Only abnormal cases of punishment are recorded. Ordinary penalties are too frequent and frivolous to merit record." The book is a record of brutality. In 1903, for example, 282 strokes were administered, at an average of 4.47 per punishment. In 1904 the number was up to 6.03 and in 1905, 5.96. In this year, on two occasions a boy received 12, and on one occasion, 10 strokes. For truancy, an unfortunate received 14. It is interesting to reflect the concern with exactitude in the punishment book. Connell argues that violence as part of masculinity became rational and scientific in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (Connell, 1995, 192). The punishment book reflects the concern with regulating violence and relating it, scientifically, to a particular offence. Rather like adding a neutralising agent to a dangerous acid, punishment became the exact science of correction.¹² A breakdown of punishment reveals the mind of the punishment dispensers and gives some idea of the narrow borders within which boys were expected to walk to avoid beating.

Categories of Punishment and Number of Boys punished therefor during the period 1888-1905

1. Lazy, Neglect, Untidy, Careless, Shirking work, Failure, Cut work, Inattention = 91
2. Disobedient, Impertinent, Impudent, Cheek, Disrespectful, Insolence = 22
3. Dishonest, Cheating, Truant, Cribbing = 30
4. Thuggish, Disorderly, Riotous, Vandalising, Ink-Slinging, Talking in Exams, Cut Detention, Misconduct, Brawling = 119
5. Bullying = 6

The above is an incomplete list of corporal punishments meted out by the headmaster and (sometimes) his assistant. Headmasters differed in their attitude to corporal punishment.

¹¹ The Moors (Estcourt) and the Nicholsons (Richmond) sent children to all three schools. It became so important to send sons to these schools that in the 1920s some farmers bonded their farms for this purpose (Fly interview, 1992; Ravenor Nicholson interview, 1992).

¹² The Punishment Book is housed at the Maritzburg College Museum.

Clark was considered as "lenient almost to a fault", "although many of his pupils came to know the sting of 'Black Maria' (his cane)". On the other hand, Barnes and Pape were severe and beat pupils inexhaustibly (Haw and Frame, 1988, 176).

By far the most beatings were delivered by assistant masters and prefects. These not infrequently involved excesses, even by the standards of the time. In the 1890 the following incident occurred at MC. The science master, Mr Greator, a man of "fiery temper" lost his temper and beat a boy seated in his class around the head, sending him eventually tumbling to the floor, apparently lifeless. The boy recovered but a scandal developed in the press, causing numbers at the school to fall from 153 to 42 in three years (Haw and Frame, 1988, 121).

The history of MC is replete with tales of quick recourse to the cane and of the undiscerning and unjust nature of punishment. But this is not confined to MC. At Hilton in the late 1870s beatings were regular. An old boy remembered that, "Mr Crowe, the senior master, was a very good teacher; but nearly every day some boy would get a sjamboking, or a cut or two." On one occasion a pupil was beaten two or three strokes for asking for a new copy book!¹³

It was not only assistant masters at MC who were to blame for the carnage. In 1890 the prefect system was introduced at College to cope with the increased numbers of boarders. Clark, the headmaster, gave the prefects extensive powers including the (illegal) power to inflict corporal punishment without seeking his permission and without recording the infraction. In a subsequent enquiry, the Council of Education concluded that

at times boys have been treated with undue severity, and at other times with too much indulgence, and have been the objects of contemptuous and unbecoming language, on the part of one or more of the Masters. Corporal punishment has been inflicted with too great frequency ... (but) in many instances when deserved was inadequate. ... (The headmaster said) that at least one half to the boys sent to him for corporal punishment were undeserving of it, but that he felt it his duty, in order to uphold the position and authority of the Assistant Masters, to inflict punishment without enquiry. (Haw and Frame, 1988, 127)

Corporal punishment in the period under discussion was considered normal and, within limits, essential. Most boys preferred a beating to other non-physical forms of punishment. There was a macho bravado that accompanied beatings. They challenged one another to 'races' to see who would get the most strokes over a stipulated period of time. In a vivid account of the aftermath of a beating at Michaelhouse, some of the schoolboy fascination for, and reverence of, the beating is apparent.

After the beating it was the privilege of one's dormitory mates to inspect the damage. I was disappointed that there was not more enthusiasm. 'What, no blood?' said Crowe minor. 'Don't call that much,' said Heathfield. 'Alfie (the teacher) took pity on you, you weed,' jeered Elison, who was measuring my bruises with a ruler. Nevertheless, for the remainder of that day I was a little hero and for ten days after, the discolourations were there for all to inspect in the bath-house. (Stiebel, 1968, 189)

Beyond this there was an acceptance that it was 'right'. "I am sure we [we]re all the better for it" (Ixopo High School, 1965?, 5-6). In an interview, an old boy said that caning didn't bother him - "it purged my guilt". He did not bear grudges and respected teachers so long as they were fair and just (Alcock interview, 1992). Beatings were therefore accepted not just because the system

13 Reminiscences of Sir Duncan McKenzie, at Hilton in the late 1870s, (Nuttall, 1971, 176). At Michaelhouse the situation was much the same. (Barratt, 1969, 40).

required them but because they proved masculinity. John Honey's description of the public school experience of masculinity is apposite. "[L]earning to endure humiliation and physical pain, to come to terms with public opinion and to know one's place, rising to be a house prefect, school prefect or games captain, and arriving at the end with that quality of self-confidence and poise which came to be the hallmark of the public school man" (Honey, 1987, 155).

Section 5 Prefects

At Hilton, prefects were introduced by the first headmaster, Newnham. They were given the power to "put any boy 'in bounds'" which was to "make him stand in one spot for as long as they thought was necessary as a punishment" (Nuttall, 1971, 19-20). In 1878, the next headmaster extended the prefect system and the power of the prefects closely following the Rugby model. He issued a school constitution which outlined the tasks of prefects (praepositors).

To call the Roll at the hours required by the Headmaster; to punish loiterers and to report absentees. To keep order in the dormitories, at meal times, and at all but school times; To regulate and enforce the playing of all Big-side games; To punish all minor offences with impositions (not to exceed 100 lines of Greek, or 200 lines of Latin, or 300 lines of English); To punish deliberate disobedience to their authority with corporal punishment, to be administered by one Praepositor in the presence of at least one other; such punishment not to exceed eight stripes with a light cane or wattle switch Provided that any boy awarded such corporal punishment shall have the right to appeal ... to a court composed of the Head of School and an equal number of Praepositors and heads of forms. If such court of appeal shall confirm the original sentence, it shall be carried out publicly before the School assembled. (Nuttall, 1971, 176)

The prefect system became integral to the running of the school and the powers of the prefects entrenched. A diary of a Hilton pupil in 1913 gives some indication of this. "Quintus (Robinson) (Clearly the nickname of a prefect RM) went to get sticks at Henderson's for hidings. He seems fed up but says he has to flog ... we had the kaffirs job of clearing the grounds again today ... I and Muller got two cuts each with a stick about as thick as my wrist we were accused of not working hard enough on the field" (Nuttall, 1971, 49-50).

It was the new boy who bore the brunt of the prefect system. He could "not walk across certain lawns. The corridor of the main building and past the studies is out of bounds for him. If he offends against these or other rules, he may be summoned to the prefects' room, and, provided that the sanction of the housemaster has been previously obtained, he may be corrected with a cane" (Hattersley, 1945, 126).

At MC the prefect system likewise entrenched itself, but by the 1920s it had exceeded its usefulness. It was little more than a tyranny of big over small and contributed to a marked decline in the number of boarders (Haw and Frame, 1988, 236).

With respect to punishment and prefects, the rural government secondaries were much the same. At Ixopo, for example, "'Boss John' (Mr Robinson, the headmaster) used the cane freely ... How dearly he loved to line us round the room for mental arithmetic at about 2.30 on a summer's afternoon, when all were feeling somewhat drowsy. It was a case of 'quick's the word' for if you missed your answer you got a cut" (Ixopo High School, 1965? 5-6).

The inflicting of corporal punishment with such ease and frequency cannot be explained solely with reference to persuasive British educational models and even less to sadism (though both played some part). Within Natal there were three sources which demanded corporal punishment. The parents, who beat their own children, were a major factor. The boys, as we saw above, another. The state's educational officers were a third. In about 1912, an Inspector reported adversely on Ixopo Government school.

Std III appears to need special attention and treatment. This class consists of 14 pupils, all but three of whom are boys. These boys ... are more interested in their shooting and swimming than in their school work. They are not altogether dull, but they are in need of less gentle treatment than they are receiving at present. (Ixopo High School, 1965?, 15)

Section 6 Initiation, Fagging and Bullying

If the dangers of corporal punishment from teachers and prefects for boys appeared huge, they were nothing compared to what boys, particularly juniors, had to face on a day to day basis from fellow pupils.

Initiation awaited all (boarding) pupils. It was an ordeal, part of the toughening process, part of the assertion of hierarchical power by senior over junior boys but also part of the creation of identity. Tolson's description of these rituals is: "the boy was brutally initiated into a sadistic culture of hearty back-slapping" (Tolson, 1977, 34). At MC, 'O'Grady's Drill' was held. It involved being drilled by a senior boy, and if mistakes were made, having to run the gauntlet of senior boys with knotted towels. New boys were also required to sing a song at a specially arranged concert. If the senior boarders did not like it, the offender had to swallow a desert spoon full of a concoction including mustard, soap and castor oil (Haw and Frame, 1988, 225).

At Hilton, 'squeakers' (in the 1880s) and 'new poops' (1890s and beyond) were subjected to "semi-barbarous" initiation by the seniors known as "new poop or kid fixing" (Hattersley, 1945, 59). Specialities were the sailor's toss and merciless ducking in the dam. "Ugly tales have been told about small boys' sufferings down the hole in Devil's Decoy [a particularly deep part of one of the Estate's pools which "appeared to reach sinister depths" (Hattersley, 1945, 60)] now filled in and no longer a torture chamber" (Nuttall, 1971, 28-29).

At Michaelhouse things were similar. Ruth Pennington, wife of a Michaelhouse master in the 1920s described initiation of 'cacks' as 'unbelievably terrible' and 'absolutely brutal' (Pennington interview, 1992). New boys had to stand on top of a pile of boxes and recite poetry or sing. If the offering was not appreciated, the boxes would be kicked down. Another form of initiation was the "long-established practice of initiating newcomers by pitting them against 'physically superior pugilists'" (Barratt, 1969, 55). And ducking in the big communal bath was common, taken to the extent on occasion of near-drowning.

At times initiation might not be so traumatic an experience. If a boy was physically strong or surrounded by a group of close friends from his primary school days, it might be mild. In the government country secondaries, initiation existed but was generally milder in form and less important as a ritual of institutional entry (Alcock interview, 1992; Nicholson interview, 1992).

Initiation occurred with the blessing of the headmaster and teachers, and naturally with the hearty endorsement of the prefects. As Nuttall puts it for Hilton, "The school's cherished

reputation for toughness resulted in many a sensitive youngster suffering agonies of fear at the toughening process" (Nuttall, 1971, 28-29). Some steps were taken to prevent 'excesses' and Ellis, the Hilton headmaster, used to check, for example, that beatings by prefects at the site of initiation (the dam) were not excessive, but for the most part either a blind eye was turned or it was regarded as a healthy and important part of the extra-curricular activities of the school (Haw and Frame, 1988, 225; Pennington Interview, 1992). Remembering the Michaelhouse regime in the early 1920s, J W Cross said that the masters had the view that the school could do without namby pambles (Cross interview, 1993).

Fagging was common at the private schools but less so at MC. It is not clear from where the term originates, though its misogynistic echoes are unmistakable. It involved junior boys doing chores for older boys in a peculiar mimic of the family situation.¹⁴ Fagging was part of a broader institutional set of codes developed by the senior boys to regulate school life beyond the classroom. Apart from the services actually provided by junior boys for senior boys - making their beds, polishing their shoes, buying them tuck, etc. - the extended fagging system had as its rationale the establishment of a hierarchy. The system was structured around length of enrolment in the school. In the first two years at Hilton, you were a 'new poop', subject to the whims of senior boys. Your inferiority would be drummed into you throughout these two years ceaselessly. You were at the mercy of prefects and seniors. You could be caned for not watching 1st XV rugby or for not remembering the names of the cricket or rugby teams.¹⁵ In boarding houses with tyrannical prefects and seniors you could be summoned and forced to do anything. In houses where paternalism held sway, the service ethic would be imparted - 'new poops', for example, would clean sporting equipment. To remind juniors of their place, on Friday evenings, they would be subjected to 'Hot Oven'. 'Old Poops' sat on the beds with their legs against the wall while 'new poops' were forced to scuttle beneath, being flayed by the older boys as they went. A further, more regulated, reminder of place came after evening cocoa break when prefects beat offenders for offences such as 'walking over the grass' (Fly interview, 1992).

Fagging existed and continued because it was endorsed by teachers, enforced by seniors and accepted by juniors. There were rarely inroads made into it as a system. Occasionally a new headmaster would recognise its dangers and attempt to break or refashion it, via an attack on the power of the prefects. Boys who rebelled did so by fighting their oppressor, but this did not change the system, though it might resolve an individual case of injustice. For the most part, the juniors accepted the authority of the prefects and seniors and, when the system was working well, respected the prefects (Hattersley, 1945, 71; Nicholson Interview, 1992).

It is not easy to define bullying in the system described above. On the one hand, bullying - the use of position and power by seniors to coerce juniors - was inscribed within the practice of fagging and was consequently regarded as legitimate. On the other, 'bullying' was often used to refer to actions which reflected inequalities of power (status, seniority and strength), offended a sense of 'fair play' and were thus regarded as illegitimate.

Bullying, like initiation, also had the purpose of creating sameness and outlawing difference. Uniformity was created around house and school identity and around the respect for school sports heroes and love of games. Unquestioning loyalty to the school or house was an expression of uniformity "The institution became more revered than its purpose and the moral imperative to be loyal took on a greater importance than any evaluation of the object of loyalty however sincere. ... Powerful rites of intensification were fostered to this end. These consensual rituals bound together the whole group as a moral community" (Mangan, 1981,

14 For an interesting parallel of family construction in the all-male gold mining hostels of the Witwatersrand, see Moodie, 1988.

15 This practice was also in existence at MC where it was a caneable offence not to shout long or loud enough in support of the team (Haw and Frame, 1988, 228).

143). For those who were perceived as weak and different, a grim fate was in store. Little is known about the secret lives of anguish in the boarding schools. There is nevertheless sufficient evidence to show that intolerance of difference (sexual, social, morphological) existed. If one's voice was too high, one's legs too thin, ability at games absent, one became the object of ridicule. In order to avoid constant humiliation, boys fitted in. Difference was suppressed, uniformity championed.

The oppression of junior pupils by seniors and the release of the pack instinct to correct a black sheep were also condoned.¹⁶ At MC, the punishment book records very few cases of action against bullying. On a rare occasion at Hilton, "an overgrown 'new poop' was taught a lesson by two younger boys who happened to be old poops. They beat him up. Ellis [the headmaster] intervened and the Head Boy "soundly spanked" them (Hattersley, 1945, 47).

Bullying was common. Here are a few examples. At MC around 1880 a group of boys had, as its 'main delight' "to bully unmercifully a gentle, studious, mother's boy nicknamed 'Bully'. Besides teasing him relentlessly, they were in the habit of jostling the unfortunate 'Bully' into the glutt or seizing his canvas book bag and twisting it until the band around his neck almost strangled him" (Haw and Frame, 1988, 48-49) At Hilton in the 1890s "[a] sadist who ironically called himself 'Gentle Hugh' ... had an evil reputation for cruelty to smaller boys and was remembered by at least one of them as 'a nasty looking specimen whom I feared and despised'" (Nuttall, 1971, 28-29). At Michaelhouse "a refined form of sadism was to place bees on the bare stomachs of small boys and rub the stings in" (Barratt, 1969, 40). Conformity was a powerful drive in this system. To avoid being bullied required first accepting the rules of the system and one's own place within it, and then endorsing the system. For those who either could not or would not fit, the weight of cruelty was heaviest. A stutterer, for example, would be singled out for harsh treatment - having to stand on a table and tell jokes, much to the delight of the listeners (Alcock Interview, 1992).

For the most part bullying occurred without official intervention or censure. It was the result of many things; the atmosphere of violence engendered by corporal punishment and the power of prefects, (possibly) the broader social context of settler violence in Natal, the large age gap of pupils, from 12 - 19 and by psychological factors.¹⁷ This last point requires elaboration. Michael Kaufman argues that being a man (in contemporary western society) involves being tough and taking opportunities to demonstrate this toughness. This is, according to Kaufman, a result of men being "unsure of their own masculinity and maleness". In the schools, toughness involved dishing out and enduring pain and discomfort (Barratt, 1969, 25; Kaufman, 1987, 14-15). Andrew Tolson explains the phenomenon of aggression and violence between boys in terms of their maturation trajectory: As a boy "grows up, the ambivalent structure of his masculine identification becomes a quest for resolution, and a boy develops a compulsive need for recognition and reward. In the culture of masculinity, rewards are always distant, at a premium. They must be fought over, competitively, through a long struggle for supremacy" (Tolson, 1977, 25).

16 Amongst the boys themselves, there were efforts to bring 'black sheep' into line - a boy who didn't shower properly and was accused of smelling, was, for example, forcibly scrubbed. Such institutionally useful behaviour was supplemented by collective attacks on deviants (never the establishment First team rugby and cricket players). So, for example, boys daring to play soccer were pilloried and even liable to a beating by prefects. (Fly Interview, 1992)

17 At Hilton this was belatedly recognised as a problem when a preparatory school was opened in 1907. "The youngsters only come into contact with the bigger boys at meal times, and then they have their own table ... For boys of such a tender age, arrangements of this kind are of the greatest importance" (The Hiltonian, 5, 10, January 1907, 76).

Section 7 General Living Conditions

The boarding establishments were generally devoid of human and material comfort. Virtually all commentators describe conditions as 'spartan'. Until the twentieth century, baths at the private schools were taken in the open, frequently literally necessitating a breaking of the ice in winter. There was no hot water other than that fetched by juniors for the seniors. Bathing was communal. At Michaelhouse, for example, the bathroom consisted of "a large iron tank capable of holding 24 bathers and 'a species of shower bath' - a perforated pipe running round the room; hot water could only be obtained in cans from the kitchen wing" (Barratt, 1969, 18). It was consequently also a place favoured for fagging and bullying. An indication of this is given in the terse statement by Haw and Frame that 'opprobrium' was attached to shirkers of showering (Haw and Frame, 1988, 229). Being isolated the benefits of modernization came late, Hilton, for example, receiving electricity only in 1926. Dormitories were very sparse containing a bed and a trunk per boy and nothing else. Medical attention was rudimentary. At MC it was believed by pupils that all ailments were treated with castor oil, so most bore illness stoically. Testimony to the conditions pertaining at these schools were the catastrophic epidemics which from time to time afflicted them. At Hilton, for example, one boy died and 14% of the school was affected in 1919 by scarlet fever. And in the following year enteric fever took the lives of five boys (Hattersley, 1945, 58).

Perhaps the source of most discontent amongst school boys was the food. The records of these schools are filled with constant complaints by boys and parents concerning the quality and amount of food.¹⁸ The schools generally responded by arguing the benefits of a lean diet - a lean, fit and tough boy. This was not always convincing. Throughout the period, maize porridge and bread were the staple, and meat was rare. Initially sugar was an unexpected and miserly addition to the tea though this improved.

In so far as the human warmth of the institutions was concerned, this too was ladled out sparingly. It frequently fell to the wives of teachers, particularly of the headmasters, to dispense the necessary. This involved having boys around for tea in the afternoons. Efforts were made to give every boy at the school such an outing each year. Apart from the cakes which were eagerly guzzled, these functions served to reduce the emotional barrenness of the schools. Ruth Pennington remembers comforting homesick and miserable boys and sometimes holding their hands when they had received bad news, such as a death in the family. This was all the female company that a boy was likely to receive. (Pennington Interview, 1992) There were very few women physically within the schools. At the turn of the century, at Michaelhouse for example, there were only three - the wife of a teacher, a matron and a music teacher (Barratt, 1969, 27).

Section 8 Personal Relations, Friendship and Gangs

Boys belonged to a range of formal groupings including the sports team, the academic class and the house. Beyond these groups all boys with the exception of "two or three solitaires who disliked gang life" (Stiebel, 1968, 158) also belonged to informal groupings.

There were three types of informal male grouping. The smallest was the close friendship, generally a one on one relationship. Here boys were able to find comfort, to explore different ways of relating, to escape, if but momentarily, the prescription of school masculinity. The

18 For example, Hilton College Archive, Headmaster's Letter Book, 12 October 1906.

second comprised of a small number of boys who generally allied themselves on entering the school. There was protection in numbers and comfort in the known. Such groups would form the unit for extramural activities, especially during the unstructured time of the weekends. The largest group was the gang. Frequently it was based on a hierarchical principle, a senior boy and his mates constituting the core. The periphery might be made up of younger boys belonging to the same family, or of younger boys with some claim to gang-affiliation, for example, sporting prowess. Gangs were often led by boys from the first cricket or rugby teams. It was not uncommon for a friendship group to be transformed into a gang as boys proceeded through their schooling years. Gangs were generally defined in opposition to other gangs and to juniors.

The most common group was the friendship group which was normally established in the first year of school. "At the beginning of each school year, new boys, unless they had friends or relatives already at the school, formed themselves into gangs which usually remained intact until school leaving. The number of boys in a gang varied, the smallest was two, the largest a dozen or more" (Stiebel, 1968, 158).¹⁹ New boys came defensively together to face the new, alien and intimidating school environment (Fly interview, 1992). Once formed, the friendship group performed a variety of functions including providing protection against other groups and seniors, companionship and a further source of identity (Cross interview, 1993). Over time, as the boys moved through the school, the nature of the groups changed. They became close-knit - boys gave one another nicknames to ward off the depersonalising 'major', 'minor' and 'tertius' used to distinguish one 'Smith' from another. They also coined names for teachers, generally of a derogatory kind, to cement one another in a collective identity against the dispensers of knowledge, punishment and routine. At MC, for example, speech peculiarities were singled out to identify teachers. There was 'Twicky' Oberle who had a slight lisp and used to say "Now this one will be a little twickie", 'Scraatch' Leach whose Yorkshire accent was lampooned as was his concern that boys not "scraatch my car", and Duck or Quack Kingdon who had a "peculiar quacking manner of speech" (Haw and Frame, 1988, 193-194). Gangs also became the place for expressions of discontent and rebellion. The most common forms were smoking, going out of bounds and fruit raids (Haw and Frame, 1988, 229-230).

Despite occasional rebellion, boys in groups tended to support rather than undermine the school regime, especially its gender regime. "Hints of non-conformity were suppressed by the boys themselves, and their informal culture was at every point bound up with, and supportive of, the ethic of the school" (Tolson, 1977, 35). Publicly, the rules of the system were obeyed. Boys accepted their place within the school hierarchy, knowing that to challenge it, and the conventions that supported it was to risk victimization. As Victor Stiebel put it, bullying was experienced by "those boys who expected to be persecuted (knowing that they did not fit in), the bumptious and the timid" (Stiebel, 1968, 149). No boy was always within (or outside) the system, however. Moments of defiance, unwitting transgression of rules, or infringement of codes could bring violent recrimination and a reassertion of rules. In their responses to power inequalities and to violence, boys did not challenge the dominant masculinity.

Friendship groups are recorded at Hilton as early as the 1880s. A well-known one was the "breakneck gang". It "was skilled in the use of a monkey rope for the descent of a steep cliff ... Breaking bounds at night ... (gang members) would take with them supplies of bread, cocoa, and if possible a fowl, and make for a cave at the foot of the falls. In warm weather a midnight bathe in an adjacent pool might follow" (Hattersley, 1945, 47). At Michaelhouse, Stiebel's friendship group in the 1920s spent Sundays together when it was mandatory to leave the school grounds and enjoy the outdoors. They hid away from other groups and took "calm

19 Stiebel uses the term 'gang' to refer to what I have termed a friendship group.

pleasures". "We were immensely happy to shed the routine of school life, to cook our skoff, to gorge it and then to lie flat on our backs, reading, gossiping or snoozing" (Stiebel, 1968, 160).

Friendship groups could be transformed over time into larger, coercive units, which in this chapter I have termed gangs. But there were other ways in which gangs came into being. At Michaelhouse "[l]arge gangs consisted of a chieftain - usually one of the school's idols - who had gathered around him younger brothers, relatives and friends ... for those subjected to bullying, it was well to avoid" (Stiebel, 1968, 158).

The friendship group had the capacity to challenge dominant school masculinity, but failed to do so. For the weak and the timid, they existed as an enclave, sitting uneasily side by side with dominant school forms of expression and organisation. Their failure to move beyond the margins is to be explained by the fact that at inception the groups were defensive units for young boys with little influence in the system. Later members of the friendship groups became seniors and in the process were toughened and inured to violence. To be violent was to express one's masculinity. Violence resolved difference. By adolescence boys no longer sought or expected to be comforted. "Nobody wanted coddling" (Alcock interview, 1992). In this transition, dominant school masculinity was embraced. The other informal social grouping, the gang, was less equivocal in its acceptance of dominant masculinity. It easily accommodated expressions of toughness and was run along the hierarchical lines familiar to the schools.

The most promising site of challenge to dominant masculinity was the close friendship. This can provide "a model for nonhierarchical, reciprocal relations that run counter to the hierarchical modes that have dominated Western society" (Diamond and Quinby, 1988, ix). The one-to-one friendship permitted the exploration of intimacy and sexuality, two areas covered by taboo. If these subjects could be brought out into the open, if the sensitivity and trust which could be developed in close friendships was integrated into styles of male relating then dominant masculinity might be shifted.

A first, and major, difficulty was in establishing close friendship. Close male friendships challenged the ethos of the team. While everything in school was done in groups, it was a potential statement of dissidence to form a close friendship, from which others were excluded. Secondly, there was suspicion about boys who talked about their inner emotions. M C C Adams noted that in the British public schools in the early twentieth century, "To be masculine was to be unemotional, in control of one's passions" (Adams, 1990, 25). The expression of individual emotion was considered to be female and was discouraged (Heward, 1988).

It was sometimes acceptable to have close friendships with women, though there were precious few opportunities. Stiebel was lucky enough to develop a friendship with his music teacher. "Whilst I was at Michaelhouse a friendship developed between us which became so close that it lasted after I had left the school. It would be difficult to overstate her importance, but I can say that without her warming presence I do not know what would have become of me" (Stiebel, 1968, 157). I have no comparable description of male friendship, though many of my informants spoke fondly of special school friends, with whom they had kept in contact through 60 years and more (Cross interview, 1993; Fannin interview, 1992). Such post-school contact suggests a depth to these friendships which distinguished them from the other forms which I have described above.

Apart from the reasons already mentioned, attitudes towards sexual conduct were a major stumbling block. The attitude towards sex was ambivalent. On the one hand, there was curiosity; on the other suspicion. The way in which sex was approached also changed over time. A range of informants, speaking about the turn of the century and the period before the

First World war, stated that sex was not discussed at all (Pennington interview, 1992; Oglvie interview, 1992). Others denied that boys ever explored sex with one another (Smythe interview, 1993). No written source that I have consulted sheds any light on this early period. There are however comparative accounts which are suggestive. In the English public schools at the turn of century, sexual repression was the norm. Boys were told that masturbation would make them blind or insane and there were cases of suicide and self-mutilation by boys trying to conquer sexual feelings (Adams, 1990, 31; Hall, 1991, 30). Women (in the form of the mother) were revered. Bizarre attitudes towards the opposite sex were held, resulting in sadism partly a result of "resentment of her place on the moral pedestal." Where women ceased being 'pure' and failed to fit the male-designated social role, they were reviled (Adams, 1990, 18, 20). It is likely that forms of sexual expression changed in the schools after 1918. The catastrophic effects of war allied to a greater openness about sexual matters provided new ways of talking about and experimenting with sex. The written accounts available for the midland schools are post-war and informants who spoke of sexual exploration at schools were themselves products of the post-war era (Braithwaite interview, 1993).

Sex was generally handled by pupils in two ways: publicly, via group discussion and activities, or privately (masturbation). Both these forms tended to be acknowledged and accepted by boys, though not by teachers. In an exclusively male environment sexuality could not but be related to other males. While this might have had nothing to do with homosexual behaviour as it is presently understood - the exercise of sexual choice exclusively in relation to other males - it was so construed in the boarding schools when masturbation, for example, became a sensual or loving act.

In terms of the international climate of sex, the late nineteenth century was not propitious for a challenge to hegemonic heterosexuality. Lynne Segal has suggested, following Foucault, that in the nineteenth century, the emergence of homosexuality coincided with, and was linked to, the disappearance of male friendship. "Intense male friendship was perceived as inimical to the smooth functioning of modern institutions like the army, the bureaucracy, educational and administrative bodies. Homophobia was the chief weapon against too great an intimacy in male friendships" (Segal, 1990, 139). Robert Nye offers a complementary explanation for the discovery of 'sexual perversion' in the 1870s and 1880s in France. Here the sexual witchhunt had to do with military defeat (against Prussia) and resultant national shame (Nye, 1993, 98). A consequence was that within public discourse, masturbation became a source of disdain and homosexuality an issue of censure. Science regarded both of these as symptoms of 'degeneration', a form of insanity (Nye, 1993, 100-1). In the 1880s homosexuality became stigmatised as everything "front-line troops of patriarchy" were not (Tosh, 1994, 193). At the same time the challenge of the transgressive sexual politics of people like Oscar Wilde to the heterosexist nature of society was making little headway (Dollymore, 1991). Similarly, early twentieth century feminists were unsuccessful in advancing debate about sexuality in terms other than ones which propped up hegemonic heterosexist ideas of women as the sexual servants of men (Lewis, 1994).

In the colonial context at this time, heterosexuality was becoming entrenched. In Australia from 1900 onward men were defined in terms of their occupations and their sexual orientation. A 'real man' was not a homosexual (Gilding, 1991, Ch 7; Gilding, 1992, 161). A dichotomized identity emerged where real men were pure, healthy and heterosexual and 'other' men were not heterosexual: effeminate and transvestite. In South Africa, the historical literature on male sexuality is sparse. In a rare and illuminating article, Zackie Achmat points out that the absence of serious treatment of homosexuality is political - obscuring the politics of desire, shunting it to the (racial) margins, leaving normative heterosexist discourse intact (Achmat, 1993). He argues that homosexuality was a liberating practice for the colonised subject but in

seeking to contain that subject and prevent disruption within the social order, the colonist effected a conjunction of racial inferiority and sexual deviance in the identity of the colonised subject and in this way stamped out or contained the possibilities of a liberatory discourse and practice. This was made easier by the development of a homosexual culture in the discrete environs of prisons and mining compounds populated primarily by black men.

It is not clear when and how sexual prejudice began to manifest itself in the schools. There was a good deal of ignorance amongst boys and men about sex (Hall, 1991, 4). Conditions were rife for misinformation on subjects such as masturbation. Sex thus occupied a place of mystery and danger in the worlds of school boys. Exactly how boys made sense of their own sexuality and gave expression to their own desires is difficult if not impossible to know. This is not surprising as boys and men had great difficulty in talking about sexual matters and references to such prejudice are effectively absent from the historical record.

Society-wide sexual values were not always the arbiters of sexual conduct in schools. At times, boys were able to flout convention and explore sexual relations with other boys. But sexual activity at other times was censured. Homophobia was a factor in close friendships. The stigmatization of 'being a homosexual' was a danger, no matter how innocent and platonic a friendship might be.²⁰ For boys wishing to develop close friendships the challenge was to present themselves as good, pure fellows. In this way they could shelter under the mantle of school reverence for companionship and comradeship. But not all boys were interested in establishing close friendships or creating a safe space in which to explore sexuality with another. Most seemed "over-sexed" and were simply interested, according to Stiebel, in satisfying "their desires in a variety of ways" (Stiebel, 1968, 172).

Victor Stiebel's accounts of his days at Michaelhouse are by far the fullest and most candid description of the manifestations of schoolboy sexuality. In his memoirs he distinguishes between "full-blooded homosexuality" of which he doubted that there was any at the school - "I do not believe that many of the boys went the whole hog". On the other hand, he freely admits that "sex-stimulation was accepted and no one was shocked to see in broad daylight a big boy pressing urgently with his body against a wall or a tree a boy who was smaller; both would be smiling" (Stiebel, 1968, 173).²¹ This was accepted by boys as "a natural part of school life". Some of these liaisons appear to have been forced, but Stiebel notes that it was preferable "if a partner could be found to co-operate". Often such arrangements had the advantage of a senior boy offering to "protect" a younger boy" (Stiebel, 1968, 172). Such an arrangement would involve sexual activity as well as friendship and chores by the junior and assistance by the senior. Indications are, however, that at other times any hint of sexual impropriety on the part of boys would be barracked. Boys discovered masturbating, in private or with another, would be taunted and become the butt of jokes. Much of the activity seems to have been misogynistic. Swear words, which abounded at these schools, are not contained in the record. Baker refers to the quality of swearing, however, as the "dirtiest, meanest, scurviest trick of a set of the lowest half-bred Kafir curs that ever were littered" (Baker, 1897, 129). Nor do we have details of the dirty stories so frequently told (Stiebel, 1968, 173). Yet they are likely to have emphasized sexual difference, and in the sexual dualism which they invoked, contained an assertion of female inferiority. We have some oblique references. The schools preferred male teachers and when a woman was employed, she was subjected to an ordeal. At MC around

20 This was not universally the case. There are many examples from British public schools in the mid twentieth century which testify to a much more relaxed attitude towards romance between boys. "Romantic friendships were universal at Rugby ... There was a certain amount of love, a certain amount of romantic friendship and then of sex, sometimes casual and sometimes involving love affairs. The only difference from the outside world was that it was exclusively homosexual. The sex was accepted among boys and a blind eye was turned to it. It was not an orgy - it simply went on all the time as it does in ordinary life. Homosexual sex was joked about but then so was everything else" (Devlin and Williams, 1992, 153).

21 Connell shows that engagement in sexual acts with other males does not necessarily signify homosexual behaviour, which he defines as involving a conscious move into gay sub-culture (Connell, 1992).

1910 one such unfortunate teacher was "the butt of almost continuous ragging by the barbarous horde of adolescents she was expected to teach. Much of the ragging took the form of 'sexually ambiguous remarks'" (Haw and Frame, 1988, 195). Also at MC, a major part of the new boys' concert was to enquire about the sexual knowledge of the incoming pupils (Haw and Frame, 1988, 227). This generally involved humiliating boys who showed their ignorance. The language used is not stated, but in the ritual there is a swagger which emanates from male power sexually to dominate women. In an interesting comparative study, White and Vagi argue that boarding schools developed hypermasculinity and attendant antifemale rituals" (White and Vagi, 1990, 68). In more recent times the schools have been characterised as places of unrestrained sexual experimentation and display. It is freely admitted that mutual masturbation sessions in dormitories and games involving the measuring of erections and the power of ejaculation occurred. Whether these activities had their antecedents in the period under discussion, the evidence does not reveal.

Sexual exploration involving two consenting males was generally clandestine. As Peter Lewis notes, the homosexual alternative was invisible because a gay discourse did not yet exist (Lewis, 1991, 178). Stiebel describes how he was propositioned to participate. After recounting some sexual tale, a fellow pupil, Jack, said quite suddenly

'I say, why don't you and I have a flick (masturbation) together?' Although not entirely surprised by the question I was nonplused. 'But where could we do it?' I asked. Without hesitation Jack replied. 'In the Bogs (lavatories) after Lights Out. Any night you like, man.' (Stiebel, 1968, 173)

While boys knew about such occurrences, they were sometimes too implicated to crack down upon offenders. But there are tales which show that tacit acceptance was not always the response. An informant who insisted on remaining anonymous recounted that a senior boy who was 'molesting' juniors was frogmarched by seniors into a flooded river in wellington boots where he drowned.²² Natal was and remains a deeply homophobic society. The schools were not places where these values were challenged. Boys who had an interest in exploring homosexual relationships were forced into the closet. Those who sought to develop deeper emotional ties were consequently often obliged to conceal close friendships, whether platonic or sexual. Alternatively they could become loners, coping with the system by occupying its margins. Finally, they might establish close friendship, within a friendship group, developing a closer attachment to a particular member of the group. In this way, sexually-prejudiced derision could be avoided.²³

The close friendship was not common in the schools of Natal or Britain (Lewis, 1991, 180). It was forced underground or denied.²⁴ It did not become an accepted form of male relationship and consequently was unable to resist established forms of masculinity. In other contexts, Connell (1990) has shown that challenges can occur and can affect hegemonic masculinity. In Natal's all-male boarding schools, the context was simply too hostile and all-encompassing to provide the space for the flowering of challenge.

22 It is certain that sexual abuse occurred. In her study of British sexuality in this period, Hall shows that sex was not always a matter of consent and exploration but was thrust onto young boys by seniors, or by masters (Hall, 1991, 42).

23 A psychoanalytical explanation for this pattern is provided by Michael Gilding (1991). Men who experience their masculinity in relation to other males whom they do not perceive as masculine ('whimps', 'nerds', 'poofs') wonder, whether they will be able to hold onto their masculinity. To allay their fears, difference has to be asserted, involving competition with other males.

24 In the remarkably honest account of his life as child of rich parents in the English countryside, Ronald Fraser describes his exploration of sexuality with a working class boy (significantly not one of his school mates), noting the blurring of friendship and sexuality and describing how male friendship could foster sexual discovery (Fraser, 1984, 177).

CONCLUSION

From the moment a boy entered school, the reality of power organised according to strictly defined hierarchies was obvious. In the first days of school life, the intricacies of the hierarchy would be made apparent to him. A failure to recognise the hierarchy, accept it and act according to its behavioural dictates was reckless and certain to bring down heavy sanction. The hierarchies legitimated authority. They mirrored patriarchal social structures (the family) where seniority went with age. Authority was generally accepted - the school requirements of loyalty, service, obedience all buttressed authority. To accept one's position within the hierarchy was to echo the school's interpretation of masculinity.

In dealing with the emotionally demanding school environment boys developed their own organisations. Amongst these was the gang. These contributed, in their dependence on school styles of hierarchy and behaviour, to dominant school masculinity. They also added to the regime of toughness, violence and intolerance which characterized the schools. But friendship groups also endorsed prevailing definitions of masculinity. When their members rose in the school hierarchy, whether they wielded their power as seniors unilaterally and unfairly or not, they reinforced the hierarchical powerlessness of juniors.

Forms of friendship which might have challenged the emerging hegemonic masculinity were ineffectual. One on one male friendship, whether inclusive of a sexual component or not, remained marginal. The homophobia of boys and teachers alike discouraged male intimacy. Team sports and group bonding were the prescribed form of male companionship.

The impact of the elite schools of Natal on the region's gender relations was great. They contributed to the masculinization of power - feeding their male products into positions of influence and authority in much the same way as public schools in Britain did. It hardly needs restating that elite schools also reinforced the racially exclusive order. The school was the major institutional pillar of this process of social, political and economic insinuation. This process was assisted by the development of what Steedman calls a cultural style. The markers of this cultural style were not simply an ability to do the job, but "were those qualities and styles of thought traditionally fostered in the schools of the upper classes. This 'cultural style' was elevated to the level of a set of objective criteria to be used in the selection of an elite" (Steedman, 1987, 133). In the chapters which follow, institutions which utilised and perpetuated this cultural style will be discussed.

The influence of the elite schools also radiated out into institutions which were not immediately the locus of ONF power. Boys who attended the elite schools could claim a particular identity and the privileges which went with it, found in time their gender values comfortably reflected generally amongst white men who were not of the same social rank. Compulsory education for whites between the ages of 7 and 14 was introduced in 1910. Education for this age group became free in 1918 (Behr and Macmillan, 1971, 134, 182). Where demography allowed, (ie, in the larger towns) single-sex schools for boys were the norm and these reflected many of the structural and ideological features of the elite schools. By the universalization of schooling for Natal's whites elite-school, gender values were conveyed to the male pupils in the government schools which were emulating the defining institution.

This chapter cannot be concluded without a note on the schooling of the ONF girls. The schooling of girls received nearly as much attention as that for boys. Girls-only schools were established by government, church and individuals so that by 1880 a number of secondary schools were functioning in the midlands - St Mary's at Richmond, St Anne's at Hilton and Collegiate in Pietermaritzburg (Vietzen, 1973). These and other schools grew in strength

throughout the period, prompted by similar considerations which had moved the ONFs to value education for their sons and to invest in it. As Sylvia Vietzen notes, "It would be reasonable to expect that, in an era when women's emancipation was only just beginning, girls' education would have been inferior in quantity and quality to that of boys. On the contrary, in Victorian Natal, there were many respects in which the educational needs of girls were more adequately and appropriately met than were those of boys" (Vietzen, 1973, 328). The attention given to the education of girls had three important consequences: it gave girls some career opportunity and many of the skills necessary to play a part in the household which in turn gave them social power there within; equality of treatment within education gave the ONF girls and women a sense of self and a belief in their rights and powers which proved a particularly strong class adhesive (but also strongly corrosive of specific feminist concerns) and they experienced institutions (many of which were single-sex boarding establishments) which disseminated a set of gender and class values which harmonised with those of their male siblings and menfolk and produced a loyalty to and belief in the importance of communal institutions.

Chapter 4 Rugby:

Schools, Clubs and Personalities

The first games of rugby played in southern Africa were played in the 1860s in the western Cape. Some ten years later the game was played in the secondary schools in and around Pietermaritzburg. The schools promoted the game and extended it into the adult sport and social world. Soldiers of the Pietermaritzburg garrison energetically supported the game, routinely entering teams in the leagues that were established as the sport entrenched itself. By 1920 the game had become the primary winter sport amongst white males in the colony. This was achieved despite the opposition of rival sports codes, particularly soccer.

Section 1 Sport and Masculinity

The impressive spread of rugby amongst white males can be understood at two levels. At the individual level its success can be attributed to the way in which boys responded to the challenges of adolescence and adult males made sense of and experienced their male physicality. At the social level, it can be understood as the result of conscious, collective strivings of groups and individuals who sought to realize a particular conception of society. It is clearly artificial to separate the private and public and the above dichotomy is adopted only to assist in disentangling what are clearly interwoven threads, but which for the sake of analytical clarity need to be dealt with separately.

Sport "is the central experience of the school years for many boys" (Connell, 1983, 18). In learning and participating in sport, boys develop a relationship with their own bodies as well as with the social world. These are in fact one and the same thing. Connell argues for example, that through sport, boys learn about power: the ability to achieve something even if opposed. They also learn skills, which involve operating "on space or the objects in it (including other bodies)" (Connell, 1983, 18).

Elaborating on how boys learn to be male, Connell writes

The physical sense of maleness is not a simple thing. It provides size and shape, habits of posture and movement, particular physical skills and the lack of others, the image of one's own body, the way it is presented to other people and the ways they respond to it, the way it operates at work and in sexual relations. ... The physical sense of maleness grows through a personal history of social practice, a life-history-in-society. (Connell, 1987, 84)

Sport provides the context in which boys measure themselves (literally and figuratively).¹ It is also the site in which certain masculine values are created, understood, disseminated, perpetuated, challenged. Sport thus becomes important for reasons beyond the game itself. "[I]t becomes a model of bodily action that has a much wider relevance than the particular

¹ Adolescence throws up many anxieties for boys, for example, - attachment to mother, attraction to older boys, sexual attraction for other boys. These challenge self-conceptions of masculinity. Sport heightens these or allays them.

game. Prowess of this kind becomes a means of judging one's degree of masculinity" (Connell, 1987, 85).²

In Natal, the physical demands which the schools made on the boys (described in chapter 3) stressed being tough in body and mind. It was the schools also which "made the man yet kept the boy" (Kirk-Greene, 1987, 81). In a similar vein, Michael Kimmel argues that sport is about "remaining a boy and becoming a man" (Kimmel, 1990, 56). Sport was an avenue which stretched from school into adult life, taking an individual boy on a journey into adulthood which was marked by an acute awareness of body and its capacities. An effect of this journey was that being rugged, physically capable and fit served as the colonial template for masculinity. The emphasis on tough bodies had the effect, also, of preserving certain spaces as exclusively male.

For many commentators rugby is a violent game: it pits men in symbolic combat against one another, it gives vent to deep psychic male violence. Some of this general description is correct. Displays of violence are psychological in origin as well as being socially functional - serving to promote competition in organisations that would be limp and ineffective without them (Moon, 1992, 200). The violence also needs to be seen, however, in systemic terms.

The correspondence of violence and masculinity must be seen ... in terms of two interconnected factors: first, the existence of systems which encode differential power relations (boss/ worker, priest/parishioner, doctor/patient), and second, the systematic recruitment of men to the most powerful positions. It is certainly the case that men are the custodians of social organisation in which violence is a functional component. But the violence is primarily a feature of the systems, and it is the positioning of men with these systems that requires explanation. (Moon, 1992, 196)

Yet there is another side to rugby. For many of the boys who participated it allowed for physical expression and feeling which bordered on the sensual (Connell's expression (1983, 1983, 18)). For some men rugby provided a social space, temporarily secure from the burdens of family responsibility and the demands of work. Sport could also give "meaning and sharpness to lives which had little focus" (Adams, 1990, 37).

There can be no question that the sport of rugby was of great social significance in creating a gentry in the muscular Christian tradition. As James Mangan (1981) and M C C Adams (1990) show for the public schools of Britain, games (especially rugby) were integral to the athleticism which was so important a part of British upper class masculinity in the late nineteenth and early 20th centuries. Rugby (and being athletic) was also very important in gaining jobs within the colonial service and, in general, securing old boy networks which were central to the project of the ruling class (and the ONFs) (Kirk-Greene, 1987).

Section 2 Other Sports and Challenges to Rugby

The focus of this chapter is on rugby but this is not to suggest that other sports were not similarly important. The midland settlers were 'sport-mad' and it was inconceivable for ONFs not to have an interest in sport. 'Prominent people' (all men) in Natal identified in the pages of The Natal Who's Who 1906 generally included a full description of their sporting credentials. In

2 Connell's views are not unique in this regard. Pierre Bourdieu, for example, talks about 'bodily hexis' which "is political mythology realized, ~~embodied~~, turned into a permanent disposition, a durable way of standing, speaking, walking, and thereby of feeling and thinking" (Bourdieu, 1991, 13).

the 1920s the importance of sport, if anything, had increased. Two volumes detailing the lives of 'famous men in southern Africa' (farmers, businessmen and politicians) focussed on sporting accomplishments to indicate the full extent of their achievement (Cape Times, 1929; Cape Times, n/d).

Before the advent of rugby, a number of other sports had dominated midland outdoor life. Not surprisingly, hunting was very popular. For many farm boys, learning to shoot was part of growing up, an important rite of passage was shooting one's first bird or antelope (Alexander, 1982, 4). Hunting had been a major attraction to the earliest white explorers who had made their livings from the sales of tusks and hides. Into the 1850s and 1860s, hunting provided a living for some settlers, but as the years went by and game numbers dwindled, hunting became sport rather than profession (MacKenzie, 1987b). There was much prestige in hunting and many a house in the midlands still has the stuffed trophies of past hunts to attest to this. Hunting was the sport of the rural gentry and urban professionals and businessmen. It echoed grouse shoots in Scotland and colonial drives in India (Brookes, 1992, 11-13). Hunting, containing as it did, the dangers of the wild, the pleasure of communing with nature, and, importantly, mastery of firearms remained an important sport throughout the period under discussion (MacKenzie, 1987a). Hunting

A sport which gained enduring popularity was polo. Introduced by imperial cavalymen in the 1880s, the game spread rapidly in the white farming districts, first being played in the midlands in 1887 (Cape Times, 1929, 77; Shaw, 1971, 42). As with hunting, polo emphasised martial skills. The ability to handle and manoeuvre a horse was not only a fixed part of British aristocratic expression, but in the colonial context it remained a major distinguishing feature between colonizer and colonized. There were a significant number of Indian army men who took up farming in the midlands, particularly around Mooi River, and their passion for the game established its appeal (and snobbery) in that area (Green interview, 1992; Jonsson interview, 1992). In thinly populated farming areas, polo remained a major sport, largely because it required only eight (four a side) to play, and because it was relatively cheap. While in the metropole, polo signified wealth, in rural Natal the cheapness of grazing, the availability of polo ponies and ready supply of labour (for grooms) meant that even farmers of limited means could play.³

Soccer was a sport which, unlike hunting, polo, cricket, tennis and croquet, was a direct rival to rugby. Soccer was played in Natal before rugby. While it later came to be viewed as a working class sport, initially it had no clear class affiliation. When rugby began to be played, however, there was competition between the two sports codes over resources (players and fields) which was in time translated into the language of class. Rugby's progress was held to be a victory over working class sport, working class masculinity. This will be considered in more detail in section 5 below. Soccer

ONFs, and rugby players in general, held themselves to be morally superior to the working class and to blacks. Soccer came to be considered a working class, and black, game but most Africans at this time had no contact with urban life and the sport played there. The Africans with whom midland farmers came into contact with, were for the most part still firmly attached to the land, its institutions and traditions. The homestead, chiefly hierarchy, patriarchal authority and the symbolic importance of the Zulu monarchy acted to limit the pace at which 'the modern' was incorporated into rural life.⁴ The merits of this situation were

3 Polo also was a game in which prominent ONFs came together: the all-triumphant Dargle Club team of 1896-8, for example, included P D Kimber and Duncan McKenzie and E N Griffen, three of the most prominent farmers in the district (Cape Times, 1929, 80).

4 These ideas are developed in a forthcoming, multi-authored collection, The political economy of Zulu Ethnicity: Historical perspectives on Identity in KwaZulu Natal (Durban, Indicator Press, 1996 (forthcoming)). I was editor-in-chief of this collection.

hotly debated in the colony: Should Africans be pushed along the road to 'civilization', integrated into economic and social life, or should they be left to continue a rurally-based, agriculturally-independent existence? The debates were complicated by the need for labour, the fear of being culturally swamped or militarily attacked, the Christian mission of enlightenment, and so on. For our purposes, what has here to be noticed is that on a day-to-day basis the white residents of the midlands interacted with Africans. They were part and parcel of settler life. Despite being members of "a common society with a shared system of meaning", Clifton Crais argues for the eastern Cape in a slightly earlier period, they were branded him as pariahs. "The black (was) ... the Other, a constant stranger and perpetual outsider" (1992, 126). If Crais overstates the case, he does drive home the extent of the gulf separating white from black and, ironically, their mutual intertwining. Africans were constantly visible and contact with them, especially on the farms, could not be avoided. Segregation as a policy which left some land for the exclusive use of Africans, could not answer questions about how to relate to Africans on the context of everyday life. While power inequalities, separate realms of authority and different world views helped to delineate spheres of interaction, the extent of African involvement in settler leisure time activity was less clear. Rugby was a sport in which there was no black participation, yet in specific circumstances, Africans were significant spectators, supporting particular teams with gusto. Africans working in schools, for example, took a keen interest in the sport and were incorporated into its lore.

At schools 'kitchen boys' followed the fortunes of the school's teams with much excitement and devotion. As early as the late 1870s we have evidence for such a following. After one of Hilton's first rugby victories, the boys, it was reported, "came galloping home, shouting and yelling when a kaffir, who had waited for them, told them that he knew they had won because of their voice and that if they had not won he would not have given them any tea. He also rather duffed their pride when he said that 'a lot of high pasture bulls would run down any number of cows'" (Medworth, 1964, 88-89). In a later period at MC and DHS, the black employees of the schools developed Zulu nicknames for the first XV players and such was their influence that Zulu 'war cries' became included in the repertoire of rugby chants. It has not been possible to date this development and things differed from school to school. At MC, "Jimeloyo-Ji" was a first XV warcry, being an "emphatic statement of triumph". At Michaelhouse, the use of Zulu praise songs was frowned upon as 'barbaric' and against the ethos of the school.⁵ Unlike in New Zealand where the *haka* was incorporated into the All Black routine, representative South African rugby was sanitised of indigenous influence.

The impact of subaltern culture could be closely monitored and limited at the higher levels of the game, but its influence beyond the playing fields was less easy to control. From 1905 onward, Natal began to award caps to its representative players, teams began to standardize their colours and an official blazer was adopted. Such icons become a standard part of the game, legitimating "the differential distribution of power and status which lie at the heart of a modern society, as well as the cultural values upon which such a society rests" (Synott and Symes, 1995, 139). Mangan describes these as the "dazzling symbolic trappings of both fealty and dominance" (Mangan, 1981, 161). The adoption of regalia fostered the spread of the game to new state schools which attempted "to mimic the tradition of heraldry (of older, public schools), to usurp its devices and place the imagery of the badge within its legacy" (Synott and Symes, 1995, 142). While the use of uniforms was designed to set rugby and its players aside as an elite, it was impossible (outside the confines of the game itself) to control who wore the uniforms. Discarded, lost or stolen rugby gear soon circulated far and wide. A rare testimony to this phenomenon is an account from around 1910 by Rhodesian adventurer, Crosbie Garstin:

5 Personal communication with Skonk Nicholson, Woodrow Cross, Ronald Brookes, Pat Smythe and Tony Barratt.

A henchman of mine named August invariably wore three head-coverings, though his own pate was stout enough to blunt lightning. Next to his wool he wore a striped Venetian 'jelly-bag' (salvaged from a rubbish-heap in Plumtree), which was so holed it took him a quarter of an hour to find the right one to put his head through. Atop of that came a **Marlborough football cap** (RM's emphasis) (stolen from a bungalow in Umtali). Crowned these was a rimless straw hat (that had fallen out of a train), and the whole surmounted by a nodding white plume which he had plucked out of the tail of a dead and decayed ostrich. (Garstin, 1971, 15-16)⁶

Here the once proud sign of sporting distinction was tumbled into uncomfortable symbolic union with other types of clothing. Never able to enter settler society as an equal, the wearer of the Marlborough cap, nevertheless, was able in his choice of headgear, to disrupt the sartorial codes by which settlers regulated their social relationships. Rugby could be policed on the field and off, but how it was perceived and woven into popular consciousness was always unpredictable, and often disruptive.

Section 3 Rugby and Race, 1870-1880

Rugby arrived with the second wave of immigrants which included monied members of the middle class and men with public school backgrounds, seeking their fortunes. Many of these men were intent on creating an upper class world for themselves and this coincided nicely with the aims of the early settlers.

There were a number of preconditions for the success of a team sport like rugby. Sufficient players and adequate facilities had to be concentrated in an area accessible to all concerned. In rural areas with low population density these conditions were seldom achieved (King, 1987, 45). But in schools (and towns) the necessary conditions for the success of the sport were easily met. It is thus not surprising that it was in the schools that rugby originated and took off.

The first recorded game of rugby was played in 1870 between Maritzburg College and Hermannsburg School of Greytown. Fifteen players on either side played for two hours in the town's Market Square (Nicholson and Wiblin, 1990, 8). Two years later a game occurred between Bishops College (predecessor of Michaelhouse) and Hilton College in Pietermaritzburg.⁷ The small numbers of pupils, the lack of fields and the rivalry with soccer slowed the progress of rugby. In 1878 the game received a huge impetus with the arrival at Hilton of a new headmaster, Henry Ellis. Ellis had attended Rugby School in 1860. His "conception of what a public school should be, or aspire to be, was firmly based on the Rugby tradition". He made this connection by borrowing from Rugby the fleur de lys for the school emblem and the Motto, **Orando et Laborando** (by prayer and by work) (Nuttall, 1971, 15). It may well have been the case, as Tony Mangan has demonstrated at Marlborough, that the roughness of the early intakes of students demanded some form of sport to keep them occupied, to organise and discipline them and give positions of responsibility (Mangan, 1981). From the start the headboy of school was *ex officio* captain of the first XV. But it was equally true that the ideology of class was an important aspect of Ellis's agenda. Hilton pronounced itself the producer of "gentlemen" from the outset. While other schools switched from soccer to rugby from time to time, Hilton alone stuck to the rugby code.

⁶ For a superb analysis of the historical poetics and symbolism of such attire, see Comaroff, 1987, 191-209.

⁷ The Bishops College of Pietermaritzburg should not be mistaken for Bishops (Diocesan's College), Cape Town. Bishops College existed from 1872 to 1881. It was succeeded by Michaelhouse in 1896. In 1901 Michaelhouse was transferred to Balgovan (Nicholson and Wiblin, 1990, 94).

It is not easy to say when rugby first began to be played by adult men in Natal. The first evidence of the game at senior level comes in the mid 1870s. In 1876 George Moor, a member of the powerful Estcourt farming family which made its initial fortune on the diamond fields, presented a trophy for 'competition at football' between a team of Natalians and the 'Old Colony' (the Cape) to be played at Kimberley. Four years later games seem to have been played fairly regularly in Natal itself, but there was no league and little organisation to control or direct the game. Signs of its nascent popularity, however, were to be found in the first challenge match between Durban and Pietermaritzburg in 1880 (Meiring, 1964, 14).

The spread of rugby was interrupted by the Anglo-Zulu war of 1879. The colony was caught in a panic and the local regiments were mobilised. The schools were themselves keen to contribute to the 'defence' of the colony and large numbers of old boys joined up. The schools had very close ties with the military through their cadet corps (see chapter 6). Throughout this period, military exploits received the same kind of attention and acclaim as did sporting achievement. Maritzburg College, for example, took great pride in the fact that an old boy (the son of the Colonial Secretary, Erskine) had been killed in the 1873 Langalibalele rising. In the 1879 War the losses had been heavier; nine MC old boys and one Old Hiltonian (Haw and Frame, 1988, 68-9; Nuttall, 1971, 231). The war fueled martial spirit and the victory of imperial forces steadied settler confidence. These were not conditions that were likely to break down the racial exclusivity of the game.

Relations between African and white settler could not be defined purely in terms of bellicosity. These relations are often presented as being essentially antagonistic (Bolt, 1971) and paranoid (Krikler, 1993), frequently finding expression in black rape scares (Etherington, 1988). Brutal military campaigns were waged against Africans and settler racism increased during this period. Nevertheless, there is another side to the story.

Virtually all children of white farmers in Natal spent many hours of their earliest years in the company of African maidservants. Many spoke Zulu before they spoke English. Virtually all spent their pre-school years in the company of black, exclusively Zulu-speaking, companions. An informant described the *umfaans* (young boys) as "essential companions". When it is remembered that the development of schools in Natal was slow and that many white children did not attend school or attended it for short periods only, until the 1890s, it can be appreciated that the influence of these early experiences may have been very enduring (Alcock interview, 1992).⁸ It should nevertheless be noted that it was very unusual for the sons of midland farmers to prolong the close acquaintance with their boyhood friends beyond adolescence. Their trajectories out of childhood steered them in very different directions: the black children frequently became farm hands, their white comrades, landowners, professionals, employers.

The children played a variety of games: hunting rats, rolling rocks down mountain sides with the object of jumping it across the river at the bottom, rolling water melons down steep hills while other boys armed with sharp sticks (like spears) would spear them as they rolled past. Mealie cob fights were also popular (Braithwaite interview, 1993; Christie interview, 1993; Cross interview, 1993). A contemporary source also records one of these games. A bulb, "the size of an association football" is dug out of the ground and shaped so that it rolls nicely. The boys arrange themselves in a line down the hill each with a sharpened stick. The ball is then rolled down. The boy who sticks it, moves one up the line, if all miss it, the last boy has to

⁸ The influence of such boyhood experiences is wonderfully examined by Ronald Fraser in his study of his childhood. Fraser, born of wealthy parents, became a left-wing intellectual. In trying to understand his past, he retraced, with the help of psychoanalysis, his path into adulthood. His boyhood years were spent in the company of working class children, his parents being away from home for much of the time. For Fraser, the bonds made in those years were formative (Fraser, 1984, 79).

fetch the ball from the bottom of the hill.⁹ The lives of the white farm boys thus drifted great distances from the narrow paths of the English public school model cherished by their parents and settler society more broadly. Frequently their language was peppered with Zulu names and it was common for boys to give one another Zulu nicknames. Apart from the emotional attachment to and associations with the Zulu language, there were practical reasons too why Zulu names were used. As one of my informants, Derrick Braithwaite, pointed out, "the Zulu had names for everything (rivers, for example, RM). If you wanted meaningfully to communicate with them, you had to use and accept those names" (Braithwaite interview, 1993).

Schoolmasters attempted to influence pupils in their choice of friends. The headmaster of Michaelhouse thought that heavy emphasis on English language teaching would end the "pernicious" and "apparently inevitable companionship (of white boys) at an early age with the kafirs".¹⁰

Not all schoolmasters were so hostile to 'the influence of the kafirs'. Collectively their views spanned the spectrum among settlers generally on how exactly to get a balance in race relations that would best suit the conditions facing the local ruling class. Distinct from the view that social intercourse with Africans automatically corrupted settler society was a paternalistic position which emphasized the goodness of African society and nature. R C A Samuelson, a founding pupil of Hilton College and son of an Anglican missionary, was a powerful public exponent of this view. "The human inhabitants of the land, in those days, were the kindly, cheerful, hospitable and friendly Zulus before they were contaminated, and their self-respect and pride destroyed by the seamy side of European and Asiatic civilization, and before these had taught them selfishness." "They were cheerful, happy and healthy, and had a Roman's pride, and everywhere one could hear their men, women and even the children singing. They were unrestrained in their natural and genuine gleefulness" (Samuelson, 1929, 9,12).

Samuelson held up 'the Zulu' as something fine and manly, to be emulated. He "knew all these animals by name, as well as the grasses, trees and vegetation" (Samuelson, 1929, 15). He was also blessed with a "fine pride" and generosity. The editor of the Maritzburg College school magazine had a similar view on the 'unspoilt' Zulu, calling them "a fine race in days gone by".¹¹ But there was no unanimity on the source of corruption. Samuelson blamed European and Asiatic civilization, the Maritzburg College writer blamed people of the ilk of Samuelson. The Zulu

are fast degenerating, and the more Mission Stations that are put up the faster the Kafirs degenerate. The Missionaries teach them how to read, write, and spell, but they do not teach them to be civil and industrious. The Natives use their education mostly for forgetting people's names and passes in order to get drink. Their labour is getting dearer and scarcer every day.¹²

Changes in the political economy were accompanied by shifts in racial attitudes. White society increased in number, particularly in the last decade of the century, prosperity associated with the inland mineral revolution bolstered settler confidence. No longer was reaching an accommodation with Africans the top priority. Contempt for the local black population grew. This was undoubtedly fueled by a number of clashes throughout the sub-continent between

9 *S. Michael's Chronicle* II, 7, November 1906, 11.

10 *S. Michael's Chronicle* II, 5, October 1905, 5

11 *Pietermaritzburg College Magazine* 1, 12, September 1902, 17.

12 *Pietermaritzburg College Magazine* 1, 12, September 1902, 17. Shula Marks notes that in the 1890s racial hostility was directed more at Indians than at Africans (Marks, 1970, 10).

Africans attempting to retain their autonomy and independence, and settler forces trying to subordinate them and force them into the cash nexus of the industrialising sub-continent. A writer in the Michaelhouse school magazine opined in 1905, for example, that "The chief difficulties in making them good Christians lie in the fact that they are naturally entirely lazy and extremely immoral, and horribly fond of being drunk".¹³

White secondary school teachers may have differed on some issues but most agreed on two things: whites should stick together and Africans should be civilized. The men propounding these views were also the men advocating the sport of rugby. Hilton's headmaster, Ellis, for example, spoke of the duties facing the school:

to weld into one harmonious people two alien races (Afrikaner and English RM), a task the more difficult, perhaps, from the similarity of the stock from which those races came. Then, a native population, outnumbering us ten to one to lift from a state of barbarism and heathendom to civilisation and Christianity. An Asiatic population, equal in number to our own, to train to European habits of life and modes of thought without estranging their feelings or weakening their self-respect; to preserve the energetic independence of our own rising generation in spite of the enervating influence of a semi-tropic sun and the competition of three continents. To keep unimpaired the faith of our fathers and our fathers' faith in its power to solve all the complicated problems of our national life.¹⁴

In practice, the creed expressed by Ellis and others was implemented in a way which stressed racial hierarchy and white supremacy. The generous attitudes of some missionaries like Bishop Colenso were overshadowed by a parochial meanness. In 1903, the prime minister of Natal, Colonel Alfred H Hime, refused to allow members of the Natal Native Horse who had fought for Britain against the **boers** in the 1899-1902 war to visit London for the King's coronation. He said that no "members of the contingent would be spoilt by London girls, who were inclined to link arms with members of the black races" (Samuelson, 1929, 185). Criticizing the view, Samuelson described the decision as "short-sighted and ill-conceived", arguing that Hime "should have been too ready to help to reward representatives of the natives, who had so nobly helped to uphold the honour of Britain, and through them, to attach more firmly and permanently to the Throne the love and respect of millions of natives" (Samuelson, 1929, 185). Hime had schooled in Britain but his five sons went to Hilton and he was active in the affairs of the school. His sons were all keen and influential sportsmen. Arthur Hime played rugby and soccer for MC in 1882 before going to Hilton College. He represented Natal at rugby, captained the colony's cricket team, and was an executive member of the Natal Rugby Union from 1899-1905. He was related to T K Murray by marriage. He was given the following accolade in a collection (c1925), titled, Sports and Sportsmen South Africa: "There is probably no name better or more widely known in the sporting annals of Natal than that of Mr A H Hime, whose influence on sport is reflected in practically all its branches" (Cape Times, n/d, 328). His brother, Charles, played cricket for Natal, and represented Pietermaritzburg at rugby, soccer, tennis and golf. He chaired the Maritzburg Sports Association.¹⁵

13 S. Michael's Chronicle II, 4, May 1905, 6.

14 The Hiltonian 2, 3, November 1902, 13.

15 The Natal Who's Who 1906, 92.

Section 4 The Consolidation of Rugby 1880-1900

The influx of imperial soldiers between 1879 and 1881 (to fight in the first Anglo-Boer war) was a vital factor in establishing rugby as an adult sport. The increase in competitive games leading up to the formation of a league in 1890 could not have happened without the soldiers, who provided not only the necessary infusion of players, but kept Natal in touch with metropolitan developments in the sport. The connection is clearly stated in one of the standard references to rugby in Natal. "In 1881 we remember it as Majuba year. The battle of the Majuba took place on Sunday, February 27, 1881, and less than three months later two rugby matches - one of which is fully reported - took place almost under the shadows of the famed mountain .. "Officers of the Field Force" faced "New Castle team". "The game was rough (reported the local newspaper) but thoroughly good-humoured throughout, each team leaving the field with a respect for their opponents play and expressing the wish that another match may soon be arranged" (Meiring, 1964, 18-19).

The future of the game was not always certain. By the mid-1880s disagreement with the UK Rugby Football Unions' rule change led to internal wrangling. Partially as a result of this, play became increasingly rough and lost spectator appeal. As one commentator put it, when players lost self control to the point where they became "pugilistic, the game, whatever it may be, is bound to fill the spectators with a certain amount of disgust" (Meiring, 1964, 22-23). Another factor was the exodus of fortune-seekers to the Barberton gold diggings. Many were from elite (rugby-playing) Natal families.

But the game picked up as important local dignitaries gave it their blessing. The governor, Sir Arthur Havelock and his wife and family, and influential Durban businessman, B W Greenacre began to attend local matches. The involvement of the Pietermaritzburg garrison became regular from 1887 onward. In 1889, for the first time, an "enterprising citizen" offered a trophy to the winners of the inter-town contest. The match attracted two to three thousand spectators (at a time when the entire white population of the colony was under 45 000) (Meiring, 1964, 24, 27; Marks, 1970, 6).

1890 was a crucial year. In that year, the first adult club to play rugby rules only, (Wanderers of Pietermaritzburg) was formed. Up until this time, the attraction of soccer had been apparent as all clubs played both codes. In the same year, the Natal Rugby Union (NRU) was formed with three founding clubs: Wanderers, Savages, and Dragoons. Its president was Thomas K Murray, a Pietermaritzburg businessman and a member of the Legislative Council for Klip River (northern Natal). The executive included the headmasters of Hilton and MC and a senior officer of the Dragoons, Major Thompson. Murray presented a trophy (the Murray Cup) to be played for, and for the first time, an inter-club league was formed.

Murray was to be president of the NRU until 1904. His influence was great and it is important to understand what he stood for and who he represented if we are to grasp the trajectory of rugby's growth. Murray was born in 1854 just outside Durban. He was one of thirteen children of A K Murray, who emigrated to Natal in 1849. A K Murray founded Pinetown and speculated in land, reputedly buying a million acres in the northern Transvaal.¹⁶ It was thus likely that T K Murray had some family money behind him when he grew up. He took his first step to fortune by travelling to the Kimberley diamond fields. He struck it rich and invested this, and possibly other family monies, in a 35 000 acres ranch in Swaziland. Subsequently he pioneered tin smelting in South Africa and set up, and sat on the boards of, many companies.

¹⁶ Anon, "The Restless Murrys", n/d, 3.

He was an active military man, serving in the Langalibalele rebellion and the 1879 war. In the South African war he raised his own units, Murray's Horse and Murray's Scouts and was chief intelligence officer on General Buller's Staff. He was knighted for his services. In 1886 he was elected a member of the Legislative Assembly for the farming constituency of Klip River. Subsequently he was elected for Pietermaritzburg and served until his retirement. During this period he served as Colonial Secretary and Minister of Lands and Works. He lived just outside Pietermaritzburg on the farm, 'Cleland', which "was a show place in the district" (Gordon, 1984, 42). He also owned some farms near Underberg. He was president of many agricultural societies, including the Royal Agricultural Society. He founded the Farmers' Conference (in 1891) from which, in 1905, the Natal Agricultural Union (NAU) developed. His influence spread beyond the economy, the military and representative politics. He was deeply involved in sport. As a breeder of thoroughbreds, he took a keen interest in horse racing and was, for a time, president of the Natal Turf Club. He was also Executive steward of the Jockey Club of South Africa. He captained the Maritzburg Cricket Club, participated keenly in bisley shooting and was vice president of the Maritzburg Athletic Club (The Natal's Who's Who 1906; Olsen, 1933; Cape Times, n/d, 412-3; Gordon, 1984, 38; Lambert, 1986, 175; McKenzie, 1990, 6).

Murray was also Vice President of the Natal Football (soccer) Association. In 1890 he had been considering making a donation of a cup to that body, but realised that nobody was doing anything for "the Rugby game" and therefore decided to donate the trophy to Rugby. This immediately raised the popularity of the game. A league was played for the Murray Cup between five teams (including Hilton College and Weston Freezers (there were no Durban clubs)). As was noted at the time, these teams contained "a large number of familiar family names in Natal". Savages were the first winners of the Murray Cup. At the post-match celebration, "the handsome trophy was filled with champagne and the health of Mr Murray and success to the Savages Club was heartily drunk, three cheers were given to the donor." Murray was revered in rugby circles. At the prizegiving, he was described as "our father". The speechmaker continued that "it is to be hoped that he will live long to give us his advice and assistance in all matters connected with the Union." Apart from the official influence he brought to bear, he also epitomized the male Natal settler. His success in all spheres identified him as a model of masculinity. He was chivalrous and hardy. He associated with the right people, he was wealthy, he was not tainted by public scandal and he put himself forward as a leader with a specific interest in advancing rugby. It now remains to explain why he chose to donate his trophy to rugby and not to soccer.¹⁷

There was nothing intrinsic to the game of rugby that caught and held Murray's attention. The game in the 1880s was very rough. A player in 1905 described the game then as being "of a more heroic class than the game as now played. Kicking in the scrum, hacking at the least possible pretext and screwing an opponent's neck were common or garden incidents in the quietest game of rugby. Soccer was equally rough" (Nicholson and Wiblin, 1990, 11). But by contrast to the mining settlements of the interior where soccer continued to enjoy wide support, the ONFs began to switch their support to rugby. As with the gentry of South Australia, they disliked soccer's popularity with the masses and sought to convert their soccer-playing children to rugby (Daly, 1988, 168). They sent their children to the major secondary schools where rugby was played and took the game into the adult world of sport from there. Many of Murray's political friends were rugby players and supporters of the game. There were additional class and race considerations. Soccer was played by the Natal gentry as well, but it was also played by the emerging white lower classes and by blacks. In the 1880s soccer was being played enthusiastically by Indian boys and waiters "who would have spoken

17 KCM 89/3/B1 "Extracts from the Natal Press 26 June 1890 to 7 March 1902", Natal Witness, 12 September 1890, transcribed by Alf Herbert; Meiring, 1964, 31.

English and closely observed the mores of English working-class men" (Freund, 1994, 39). Soccer came to the towns, backstreets and open public spaces. As a sport it jostled for space, attracting the newly urbanised working classes and providing new leisure time opportunities. It had the capacity to produce "familiar" from "strangers" (Adler, 1993, 33).¹⁸ For a gentry attempting to seal itself off from blacks, soccer became emblematic of threatening, socially integrative forces within society. As it forged its class identity, so it took to itself the rugby code as an additional, racially exclusive, identifying feature.

In 1891 the NRU affiliated to the South African Football Board and was able to attract to the colony, a British XV, the first overseas team to tour South Africa. Using its agricultural connections it secured access to the ground of the Royal Agricultural Society. Facilities were improved and finances put on a secure footing. The league was expanded into the interior, where a Mool River team and teams from the York and Lancaster Regiment and Nottingham Road were entered. Senior rugby clubs began to raise junior teams. In the same year, the patronage of the governor, Sir Charles Mitchell, was also secured. Increasing space in the local press was devoted to the game. In August Savages played a representative Kimberley side. The local press was impressed by Kimberley: "In general appearance and physique the visitors looked the genuine article and their tactics showed that they knew the ropes thoroughly. Their three principal attributes seem to be speed, science and unselfishness." In the same month, Natal was soundly defeated by the British tourists. The Natal Witness reported "The English team has come, seen, and conquered, the margin at the ceasing of hostilities being six goals (one from a penalty kick) and eight tries (or 25 points) to nil." It reported further that the match was watched by "the largest crowd ever to pass through the turnstiles. Nearly every grade of society was represented: church, state, bench and bar, army (not the Navy) and Auxiliary Forces" (Meiring, 1964, 34, 37, 39). The discourse now reiterated a set of themes and included images which emanated from and fed into the gender, race and class concerns of the Natal gentry. Masculinity, racial exclusivity and upper class values of civility and propriety were its key elements. At the 1893 prizegiving, Sir Walter Hely-Hutchinson, the Governor of Natal and patron of the NRU, picked out these themes.

I would like to say this, that the taste for sport, for athletic sport and exercise, which distinguishes our race has been one of the main factors in the success which has attended the exertions - whether in improvement at home or in colonisation abroad - of the Anglo-Saxon race. A distinguishing feature of sport is that it encourages friendly relations between sportsmen ... [and] sportsmanlike rivalry. (Meiring, 1964, 46)

While there were dips in the forward march of the game, these were temporary. The exodus of young men and a number of the imperial units north to fight in the Ndebele-Shona rising (1896-7) caused a drop in the number of games played. In Durban, rugby was still not well established and Pietermaritzburg remained much stronger, administratively and competitively. But rugby's administrators began to institutionalize the game. The NRU was no longer just a means of controlling and promoting the game. It expanded its involvement into the social realm. In 1892 a "soiree dansante" was held at the Forresters hall, Pietermaritzburg attended by 70 couples. A provincial identity was also promoted as Natal began to participate (initially with a notable lack of success) in inter-provincial tournaments (Meiring, 1964, 44-45).

We can learn a lot about the political place of the sport by examining the men who were in its organisational 'engine room'. The men who rose to the top of the NRU hierarchy came from two different social groupings. The first was made up of young, get-ahead, public school

18 In the British context, Vamplew (1988) has shown how industrialisation changed leisure time use, eventually propelling wage-earners into new team and spectator sports. In the South African context, Glen Adler has demonstrated how sport was effective in breaking down racial barriers within the black working class (Adler, 1993).

immigrants. The second were established ONFs. I take one example from each group to demonstrate their multiple and interconnected interests, their overlapping institutional memberships and their shared world views. C W P Douglas de Fenzi was born in Wiltshire, son of an Anglican minister and was educated at Bedford, a public school. In 1881, aged eighteen he emigrated to Natal. He was employed in the Civil Service and became active both in playing and administering the game. He was one of the NRU's delegates to the South African Football Board in 1893 and became Vice President in the following year. He rose rapidly in the civil service becoming clerk of the Legislative Council in 1893. He subsequently served as Secretary for the Commission into the Glencoe Railway Accident in 1896, headed by an old Hiltonian, J T Polkinghorne, the colonial treasurer. Thereafter he sat as secretary on many government committees and commissions and in 1910 was clerk of the Natal Parliament. In addition he managed to combine a "zealous" commitment to the military with dedicated service to the Anglican church in Natal and to the Maritzburg Association for Aid to Sick and Wounded. He was also, as we shall see in chapter 5, an energetic freemason.¹⁹

Dr Archibald McKenzie, born in the farming area of Nottingham Road, was brother of Sir Duncan McKenzie, the leader of settler forces in 1906. He was an old Hiltonian (and therefore avid rugby player) and headed the Old Hiltonian Society in 1897. In 1899 he was elected as Vice President of the NRU. McKenzie was proud of the school. Speaking at a 1910 prize-giving, he noted that old Hiltonians were "to be found in almost every useful walk in the Colony, amongst the professions, amongst the legislators and even in the sacred circle of the Ministry itself, and in every walk of useful activity and industry, commercial or of whatever kind it might be". He considered loyalty (to school, colony and Monarch) and health to be very important aspects in the make-up of men. "It was good", he said, "to see that the boys of to-day showed no falling off, either in physique, in learning, in games or in loyalty to the old School, he trusted that Hilton boys would continue to be known by their old high standards of honour." In 1902 he elaborated on this theme. He "attributed the high qualities shown by Old Hiltonians to the loyalty, manliness, and decision of character inculcated by the two headmasters of HiltonIt might be said of Hilton boys that they were honest in their dealings, upright, straightforward, and manly".²⁰

His views on race are less easy to access, but may be found in the drama surrounding the establishment of a black hospital in the heart of Durban's wealthy residential area in 1906. An American Board Missionary Doctor, James McCord, bought land and set about building a hospital on the Berea. He was vigorously opposed by the Durban gentry, amongst whom prominently were two other doctors, Sam Campbell (President of the NRU in 1914) and McKenzie. Pulling strings in the judiciary, including Natal's Chief Justice, they managed temporarily to stall the building (McCord, 1957, 127,130).²¹ McKenzie and Douglas de Fenzi were not exceptions. The NRU executive was filled with civil servants and public notables, many of whom had been to one of the rugby-playing secondary schools of the Colony, most of whom had seen service in the wars of the period, many of whom had a farming background and all of whom subscribed to a view of masculinity which rugby promoted.

19 CSO 1278, 1890/6636; *Natal Witness* 28 September, 1893; CSO 1452, 1896/126; I/MEL 111/2/9, PB 694/1902; CSO 1796, 1905/7210; CSO 1895, 1910/5334; *Natal's Who's Who* 1906, 56.

20 *The Hiltonian*, 7, 13, June 1910, 4; Hilton Archive, Old Boys Society Minute Book, Annual Dinner and Meeting, 3 July, 1897; *Natal Witness* 14 March 1899; *The Hiltonian*, 1, 2, June 1902.

21 I would like to thank Alan Whiteside for drawing my attention to this reference.

Section 5 The Class and Gender Contours of Rugby

In the rigid class system of Victorian Britain, it has been argued that sports attracted like people and that "class conciliation through sport remained fantasy rather than fact" (Speak, 61, 1988). Conversely, in a colonial setting, sport could weld men together across class boundaries. Jock Phillips describes how, in New Zealand, this was effected through 'mateship' (Phillips, 1984, 89). In Natal, both processes were at work.

At the turn of the century, sport became a class battleground.²² Changes in the political economy were crucial in explaining this development. In the cities, Natal's white workers were beginning to organise, primarily through trade unions and the Labour Party (Bizley, 1989; Reid, 1979; Van der Tang, 1996). Schools took alarm and Charles Smythe, former Natal premier, warned MC boys at their speech day

not to lay themselves open to the many dangerous and obnoxious doctrines, which were being taught to-day. He advised the boys to work well while they worked, and whatever they found to do do it with all their might. When they were working they had not to be thinking of the time for chucking down their tools."²³

Rugby was used in this context as a binding force for a particular class, the ONFs. On the other hand, it was hoped that the game would prevent the swelling of the class of "low whites".²⁴

In general terms, rugby became the game of the ONFs and soccer the game of blacks and the white working class, but one must qualify this. In Natal, class divisions existed within a system characterized by a major racial divide. So while rugby players might want to stigmatize soccer as a working class pursuit, they had also to acknowledge that it too was a sport of Englishmen. On a more mundane level, many rugby players took an interest in the soccer leagues of Britain and many played both sporting codes successfully. For this reason, rival settler sports could not always or simply be presented as alien. After all, they facilitated white racial cohesion and reiterated metropolitan connectedness. This complicated the politics of sport in settler society. Furthermore, the class borders of the ONFs (at least in the nineteenth century) were porous. New members who made the grade were still admitted. Class mobility and entry into the ONF circle was still possible. Going to one of the single-sex boarding schools and playing rugby were among the entry points. It thus took a long time (beyond the period of this study) before rugby and soccer, although increasingly seen as competitors and mutually exclusive choices for sportsmen, were clearly divided into a white (ruling class) sport and a predominantly black played and supported activity (Couzens, 1982).

In our period, however, the major development was the proselytization of rugby among whites, regardless of class position. Initially efforts were concentrated on detaching whites from the game of soccer. Alternatively, whites who continued to play soccer were stigmatized. The former MC rugby player and coach, Aubrey Langley, called schoolboy soccer players, 'soccerite thugs' (Jennings, 1966 124). Sam Campbell called soccer a "coolie game" (Nicholson and Wiblin, 1990, 95).

22 A wonderful example of this is provided by the newspaper exchanges between Ralph Tatham and the *Cape Times* over a 1913 speech by Governor-General Gladstone congratulating the South African XV for its victorious tour of the British Isles. Tatham accused Gladstone of "Such impropriety (as) should engage the attention of every man in South Africa who values his liberty" (CAD, GG 1102, 23/279. Newspaper clippings from *South African News* 5 February 1913; *Cape Times* 6 February 1913). Ralph Tatham belonged to a very prominent midland family. His betrayal of family values is discussed in chapter 9.

23 *Pietermaritzburg College Magazine* 111, 38, June 1914, 10.

24 *Pietermaritzburg College Magazine*, 111, 26, June 1908, 24.

The rural boarding schools, Hilton and Michaelhouse, tended to attract the sons of farmers and the capital's wealthy. MC, on the other hand, based as it was in the capital, attracted a socially heterogeneous band of scholars. In this environment, sharp class distinctions were made. As the headmaster put it, the presence of "the upper class sons of planters ... was a liberal education for the lower class oppidans who flocked in from the town" (Nicholson and Wiblin, 1990). In this context particular class representations became current: upper class boys come from the country, were hardy and athletic. Lower class boys come from the towns and were soft. The majority of boys at Michaelhouse, for example, were described as "the sons of farmers from Natal and East Griqualand, inclined to despise the softies from the towns" (Stiebel, 1968, 143). In a classic case of class bravado and snobbery, the major match of the year, between the day boys and boarders, at MC was described as being between the 'Gentlemen' (day boys) and 'Cabbage Eaters' (boarders) (Nicholson and Wiblin, 1990, 4, 19, 20). More candidly, day boys were called 'day farts' (Green interview, 1992).

The 'upper class' boys were generally boarders and dominated rugby playing at school. An association was rapidly made between class, masculinity and sport. Langley slated the day boys.

Why should not the dayboys of our secondary and primary schools be subjected to regular athleticism as a function of their education? Oppidans as a body are looked down upon by boarders because so many of them are thewless creatures, with only a half-developed sympathy for the scholastic institution they attend. (Nicholson and Wiblin, 1990, 19)

Although the day boy-boarder division was a sharp one, it was not impermeable. To be stigmatised as equivalent to a day boy, one simply had to dislike rugby particularly or sport in general. In the 1901 edition of the school magazine, such boys were despised: "There's the usual brood which aspire to higher things and waddle off to parade Pietermaritzburg with choice companions or to hold skeins of wool for their grandmothers" (Nicholson and Wiblin, 1990, 19). And in order to give edge to these stereotypes, a tradition of inter-house rugby matches was established, pitting the weak day boy houses against the boarding houses. On one occasion (in 1913) this resulted in a margin of 130 - 0!

The love of, and ability to excel at, rugby became synonymous with manhood. Conversely, those who had other inclinations were despised. Victor Stiebel, a pupil at DHS and Michaelhouse, and later a famous costume designer in the London art and drama world, described it this way:

South Africa in the early nineteen hundreds had little use for the Arts and to be born with an interest in any of them was to be born with a stigma as unattractive as a club-foot. This contempt for the imagination was one of the factors that encouraged me early in my life to plan one day to leave the country of my birth. (Stiebel, 1968, 9)

There was punishment for those who did not fit the mould. Natal was "fanatical in its enthusiasm" for rugby - "this enthusiasm was shared by every man, woman and child - white, beige or black - dog, cat, bird, lion, zebra, antelope, giraffe, impala, buck, cheetah, wart-hog, wildebeeste, crocodile, elephant, hippo and rhinoceros." One was obliged at school to share this enthusiasm by watching the first team rugby game. "It was the duty of every non-player to demonstrate his loyalty to his school by bellowing from the bottom of his lungs. If a covey of prefects considered that our applause was unsatisfactory, after the visiting team had bathed and changed, been given tea and departed, we would be ordered to parade once more on the

rugger field where, toeing the touch line on the empty pitch, we would scream and yell until our superiors were satisfied" (Stiebel, 1968, 144-145).

It was held by the game's enthusiasts that rugby was the sport which uniquely combined team-discipline and opportunity to experience one's masculinity. Describing "the violence and fury of that wonderful game", Bill Payn, MC old boy, DHS schoolmaster and Springbok rugby player, identified its appeal: "I have always thought that the supreme joy in rugby is in running - running after a man who has got away and is threatening one's side with danger; running through the defence, or, best of all, running for your very life for the try line" (Jennings, 1966, 129,275). And at MC, rugby was held to be a "powerful binding force in the school" (Nicholson and Wiblin, 1990, 11). Unless one abandoned selfishness, one could not advance. The team was stronger than the sum of its individuals .

Rugby offered to boys and men the opportunity to express a physicality in socially accepted ways which were at odds with the tight prescriptions that existed in other spheres. It provided a place where friendships could be established and social networks entered (Messner, 1992). It was also a place where men could define appropriate behaviour. As White and Vagi (1990) have shown, this often included the use of misogynist and homophobic language and excessive verbalizing and venting of emotion. It was therefore also a place where some boys could feel acutely out of place.

Rugby was a game which could threaten one's masculinity, make one feel inadequate, exclude and negate you. Here is a description taken from a novel about an English public school

Nox (a new boy) did not shine at games. Jaraby (a prefect) put him down as a second-row forward in rugby practices, but his slightness of build was little help in the scrums and he often found himself, cradling his head in terror, beneath a collapsed formation of heavy limbs and flying boots. He had a horror of the muddy ellipsoid and avoided it as best he could. Once, finding it unexpectedly in his hands, he started to run in the specified direction but was promptly brought down and the ball sank deep into his stomach, winding him and in fact cracking a rib.

'You are not much on the rugger field,' Jaraby said. 'Men in this House are expected to do a little better.' Jaraby's small eyes bored into his, and Nox felt himself accused of a crime. (Trevor, 1964, 21)

Yet, despite the obvious fact that not all boys would be good at rugby, it became increasingly the case, that all would play it. This fostered a close association between class, sport and masculinity. It was not necessary to be good at sport to be manly, it was just important that one played. Who knows what psychological damage this did to boys who loathed the sport but were forced to play? Roy Campbell (son of Sam Campbell) gives us some inkling of the effect of this policy. Roy's brothers and father were "quick-witted and quick-fisted, fine soldiers, great hunters and fishermen". They "loved nothing better than violent physical activity." Roy, on the other hand, "seemed to have been born out of place" and throughout his life, experienced a "deep unhappiness when he felt he was failing to live up to them" (Alexander, 1982, 5-6). He became a poet of international repute, but spent his life trying to prove that he was a man, by drinking heavily, challenging male authority, placing himself in physically dangerous situations. On the other hand, the insistence that the midland schoolboy play sport created the fact of hard, athletic bodies, and gave physical demonstration to the claim that masculinity was about being athletic and hardy. In this regard it is significant to note how widespread was adult involvement in the game. In many other times and places, on reaching adulthood and leaving school, males give up team sports and graduate to other leisure time activities (Connell, 1983,

22). In Natal, the importance of participation was maintained into adulthood, giving bodily expression to the colony's hegemonic masculinity.

Failure to endorse rugby as the sport was taken as treacherous, opening one up to class, race and gender (homophobic) insults. By contrast, people who played the game, even if they were not of the home region or class, became available for social inclusion. In 1904 a visiting Cape Town team, the SA College team (SACS), were treated warmly, even when they defeated most of Natal's top teams. The 'sturdy visitors' were complemented on their "dashing and clever" play.²⁵ Similarly, those who increasingly came to watch the game, were also considered to be associating themselves with a particular project. The NRU secretary announced his pleasure at the "large and fashionable crowds who now fill the Grand Stand and surround the main oval at Lords on the occasion of an Inter Town match".²⁶

The playing of rugby became an important part of social identity. For example, while the 'Afrikaner' was the enemy in the nineteenth century, he became a (white) fellow citizen after Union. While there were many factors facilitating this transition, the fact that rugby was a sport of the Afrikaner gentry (especially in the western Cape) did much to promote this (Grundlingh, 1994). Over the period under discussion, an increasingly specific image of the rugby-playing gentleman was developed which was distinguished by its class focus and its associated prescriptions of masculinity. This was not specific to Natal. In New Zealand, participation by men in the South African war and in the All Black rugby tour of 1906 were used by the media to sketch a picture of masculinity which included physical superiority, courage, a special ability to "rough it", self-confidence, resourcefulness, initiative and adaptability (Phillips, 1984, 85-6).

In a 1913 prize giving at Michaelhouse, Sir William Beaumont, Judge in the Supreme Court, urged that the personal qualities which the school should implant in boys were those "admired in a man - rectitude, consistency, moral courage, kindness, and consideration for others". In this regard, sport "helped the development of self-restraint, generosity to opponents, and physical culture. Most of their greatest men had been good sports at school." He continued the British Empire was the greatest empire ever seen.

If they (boys) had the privilege of being members of that great Empire, that privilege carried with it a corresponding obligation, and that was to be true and loyal to that Empire, and they should do all that lay in their power to maintain it and to defend it in peace and in war. (Loud applause.) But there was not necessity to brag about that. He considered bragging un-English, and he hoped that they would put down any boy who bragged or boasted. (*S. Michael's Chronicle*, III, 6, June 1913, 10, 12)

On another occasion, the theme of chivalry was emphasized. "There is in the circumstances of modern life far too great a tendency to push oneself at the expense of others I do not think this displeasing tendency is likely to show itself in boys brought up in this college".²⁷ The generation of a set of common values and institutions (like rugby) meant that a remarkably cohesive social class was created.

The strenuous advocacy of rugby was also fueled by gender worries. Relations between white men and women in the colony were changing. In Britain major feminist campaigns were underway from the 1880s onwards to give women better education, to gain them the vote and to reduce male sexual power over them (Fletcher, 1980; Hearn, 1992, 116; Jeffreys, 1984,

25 KCM 89/3, NRU Annual Report for 1904-5, 83-5.

26 KCM 89/3, NRU Secretary's Report, 27 March 1909, 119.

27 *S. Michael's Chronicle*, II, 14, June 1910.

22-44). At the turn of the century a suffragette movement was established in South Africa. It was a white middle-class organisation which took up the franchise issue at the expense of black people who were denied the vote (Walker, 1990). Urban women formed the mainstay of its support. In Pietermaritzburg a branch was established in 1910. Its activities were in large measure responsible for white women getting the municipal vote in 1914. In 1916, Pietermaritzburg's first female councillor, Mrs Sarah Ann Woods, was elected (Merrett, 1988, 214).²⁸

Women may have wanted political rights and equality before the law, but this did not mean that they were unsupportive of their husbands and families (see chapter 8). ONF women backed their husbands and sons in the game of rugby. A newspaper reported in 1900 reported approvingly on the "increasing numbers of spectators - of, I rejoice to say, both sexes - is an evidence in itself of the growing popularity of the game".²⁹ Support from the touchline was consonant with the commitment of ONF women to the family. There was simply no question of wives challenging the patriarchal form of the family. "Trust your Fathers, your Husbands and your Brothers to look after your Interests, and remember that 'than hand that rocks the cradle rules the World'".³⁰

So what did the ONFs have to fear from the publicly loud but locally ineffectual challenge to their authority? Not very much. The suffragette movement may have 'raised consciousness' but women only got the vote in 1930. Furthermore, there was little likelihood of wives breaking rank and crossing the racial divide. White women did not forge cross-race ties of solidarity (Beall, 1982, 129; Burdett, 1994) Walker, 1990; Walker, 1992).

On the other hand, white women were expected to be chaste, obedient and loyal. As Cheryl Walker puts it, "white women were custodians of 'civilised values', icons to the ideology of racial superiority, to be revered, protected and firmly controlled by their men" (Walker, 1990, 321). Suspicion about sex (particularly between black and white) at this time led to the promotion of a creed which stressed that physical pleasure could (and should often) be found in sport, rather than sexual intercourse. Women were expected to foster a happy environment in which sport was promoted. This would assist them to avoid corrupting sexual temptation (Stoler, 1989, 649).

As the game became more public and obtained media attention, so it became part of media hype. And the form of masculinity it carried, was increasingly legitimated. Rugby was presented as a game of the titans. While playing rugby assured social acceptance, to excel at it ensured immortality. The press gave prominence to skilful rugby players, granting them "semi-divine status". At the national level, the flowery reportage of the Australian novelist, A G Hales, on the first Springbok tour to Britain in 1906, refined reportage to an art.

(Marsberg) made himself pretty near football famous this day. Once, when his goal was in danger, he went for the ball in a lightning-like rush, snapped it up and was off like a wild steer into the bush. He fairly flew for a few yards and then they came at him. He put all his great strength into the task and went through them or over them like wind through a wheatfield ... One got the shoulder, another the outstretched arm and hand; round this one he dodged like a Johannesburg debtor doubling around corners. (Grey-venstein, 1977, 42)

28 The suffragette movement did not have widespread support in the metropole or the periphery (Callaway and Helly, 1992, 80; Greytown Museum, File - Greytown People: Tatham, MV/2.).

29 Natal Witness, 28 March 1900.

30 Greytown Museum, File - Greytown People: Tatham, MV/2.

This view of masculinity was endorsed by the opprobrium showered on "non-players, who are so through laziness or indifference, (and) are the least satisfactory boys in every respect".³¹

Section 6 The Spread of Rugby, 1900-1920

In this period, rugby was spread more widely through the colony and the number of teams playing increased many fold. No longer was Pietermaritzburg and its surrounding country districts undisputed champion or heart of the game. Durban teams began to inflict defeats on the inland teams both in the intertown competition and in the premier Murray Cup. Even at school level, DHS switched from soccer to rugby and in 1910 inflicted a defeat on the near invincible MC team.

In 1903 and 1905 the size of the league warranted the establishment of sub-unions in Durban and Pietermaritzburg respectively. As its administrative capacity expanded so more attention was paid to promoting the game at local, regional and national level. Natal now regularly entered a team into the Currie (inter-colonial) Cup.³²

Despite the interruption of the 1906 rebellion, the game spread into small towns (Ladysmith and Weenen) where populations had hitherto not been sufficient to support a team. The distant East Griqualand team of Kokstad affiliated to the NRU in 1911 and touring teams were sent into the Transkei. The game reached the sub-tropical coastal belt of Zululand in 1921 (Thomas, n/d).

The fortunes of the provincial team became more significant. Local media gave much coverage to the team, its players and its results. Regional pride was staked on the performance of the representative XV. A major reason for this new emphasis was to be found in Natal's failure to retain some political autonomy in 1910. When South Africa was united, Natal's preference for a federal system was defeated and a union was established. But separatist feelings were still strongly expressed. In 1910 Natal adopted an official blazer and in 1912 succeeded in getting its first player, L Randles, selected as a reserve to the national squad. The strength of the representative XV and the efficiency of its administration were all held to reflect on the province more generally. With its rise in status, the sport now received special treatment. In 1910, for example, a British touring team played in Pietermaritzburg and the mayor requested businesses to close early to accommodate popular interest in the game and to ensure a sizable crowd.³³ From this point on, administrators concentrated less on promoting the game inside the province, and more on getting the best representative team and ensuring its best possible performance. And in this they appear to have been successful: In 1911, the Natal team was described as having "showed most marked improvement, and the open game in which they delighted was very refreshing to a jaded football appetite" (*Cape Times*, n/d, 157). A manager was now employed to coach the team while engaged in Currie Cup duty.³⁴

The First World war understandably disrupted the playing of the game. When it was over, the by now well-established dictum concerning rugby and war was repeated: "players almost to a

31 *The Hiltonian*, 111, 32, June 1911.

32 Natal first played in the Currie Cup in 1892. The Cup originated in the donation by Donald Currie of a gold trophy for the South African team that did best against the touring British team in 1888. Currie was described as "a colossus in the shipping world". He founded the Castle Line in Liverpool in 1862. He expanded his operation to the Cape in the 1870s and focussed operations on South Africa. He merged his line with rivals, the Union Line in 1900 (Mitchell and Sawyer, 1987, 6).

33 KCM 89/3/B1, Natal Rugby Union Minute Book 6 March 1902 - 4 November 1919 (KCM 89/3) Meeting of 12 June 1910, 138.

34 KCM 89/3/B1, Natal Rugby Union Minute Book, Meeting of 28 May 1911.

man ... gave themselves whole-hearted to the Empire's cause. Rugby players throughout the world have proved themselves second to none in deeds of courage upon the battle fields of Flanders, Gallopili (sic), etc, and South African players have showed that they have been equal to the very best".³⁵ Just three years after the end of the war, the first Springbok rugby tour to New Zealand, the premier rugby nation of the age, was undertaken. The game had reached maturity.

after
WWI

In the early years of the twentieth century, the NRU executive began to broaden its membership. Durban figures, particularly after 1910, began to come to the fore. The Stedle family, prominent members of Durban's shipping fraternity and excellent rugby players who represented Natal and South Africa, began to make an impact on the running of the game. But men from the midlands remained influential. We shall examine just three of them here.

Aubrey Langley was probably the most famous of all Natal's rugby figures from the late 1890s until the 1910s. He came to MC in 1897, banished soccer, built up the MC team until it was strong enough to win the Murray Cup in 1900. He himself was a powerful man and during his playing career represented many teams, including the representative Natal team.³⁶ He was a most competent referee, refereeing many an important game. In 1903 he was a member of the Maritzburg Sub-Union Executive. In 1909 he moved to Durban as DHS headmaster and within a year replaced soccer with rugby. He poached some of his former MC players and succeeded in defeating the MC first XV soon afterwards. By all accounts, it was his energy and commitment that installed rugby as the major winter school sport in Natal.

Langley was idolised by rugby players, boys and men alike. He also had a devoted African following who called him **Madovu** (moustache) or **Inkunzi** (the bull) (Jennings, 1966, 120). Yet there were many aspects to his make-up which, in retrospect at least, said something about what kind of masculinity was being promoted. We have two separate accounts of Langley from schoolboys who attended DHS in his reign. Victor Stiebel, a boy who was poor at games and particularly disliked rugby, described him c 1916. He

was as gaunt and as highly-coloured as the school buildings. And tough, always carrying, metaphorically, in the hands that he clasped behind his back, a cane for beating. His head, on top of its neatly corrugated neck, was shaped like a coconut and possessed about as much expression - except for the eyes. Mr Langley's eyes were hooded, restless and bad tempered. He was disliked and feared by the boys and I suspect by the masters too." (Stiebel, 1968, 105)

Roy Campbell was also not competent at games. He offers the following opinion.

Langley, the son of a dour Calvinist missionary, was a tremendous personality. He was the queerest mixture of sensitive artist and stern disciplinarian. More than half the school would have died for him: and even I (who abominated him) was elated for days if I could accidentally earn a word of praise from him. He hated me with a deadly hatred from the beginning, not for anything I had done, but that my father (Dr. Sam Campbell) had founded the Technical College, a soccerite school for poor children, where they could be educated free: thus cheating Langley of a mass of human material which might have been welded by his MASTER-HAND". ... He revelled and gloated in the misery he inflicted upon me. (Jennings, 1966, 124-5)

35 KCM 89/3/B1, Natal Rugby Union Minute Book, Special meeting of NRU, 30 May 1919.

36 Langley was also a passionate big game hunter who gratified his passion in the company of his brother and officer friends in the garrison. CSO 1872, 3095/1909. A S Langley to Colonial Secretary, 27 May 1909.

Langley was a talented artist with water paints (his son was later a novelist of some renown), yet he was also cruel and vindictive. On one occasion he forced Roy Campbell, then suffering from a weak heart, to box against his best friend. "Langley got furious when he saw no blood, and coming up quietly behind me, cut me across the back with his cane. 'Fight, you swine! Fight, you Technical soccerite! I won't have malingering in my school!'" (Jennings, 1968, 126).

Langley's influence and reputation were not just measured by his actions. He spoke out powerfully and publicly about rugby. In 1908 he gave an address on "The Function of Athleticism in education". He argued that athleticism was important. "The qualities developed on the football field were sound, for they held good under conditions of life and death the spirit of camaraderie bred of sport was always there to help under all conditions whether favourable or adverse. These different qualities had merged into a powerful manliness which was noticeable everywhere, and made them fit companions (sic) for their elders who saw service in the Boer War, and did so well there."³⁷

We now turn to a less flamboyant teacher, the Rev John Stalker. Like Langley he was a master at MC having arrived at the school in 1880. He was an Oxford graduate and keen rugby player, turning out for the MC first XV. In 1894 he nearly lost his job because the academic results of MC were so bad. Sir Henry Bale, MC old boy, advocate, member of the Legislative Council for Pietermaritzburg and shortly to be Attorney General and Minister of Education, came to his rescue. From this point on, Stalker did not look back. He became active in rugby administration and retired from the school in 1902. In 1903 he was treasurer of the NRU, and the following year secretary. His career is notable for at least two features. As has been indicated, he associated with the political representatives of the Natal gentry and included amongst his friends, the Hime brothers, particularly Arthur Horace Hime, Old Hiltonian and rugby player of renown. He was also a freemason and publicist for a number of settler causes. He favoured white land settlement in Natal and was fiercely jingoistic. In a pamphlet which his brother had privately printed in Scotland, Stalker wrote in 1902: "For years, with growing impatience, they (Natalians) watched the increasing arrogance and tyranny of the Transvaal oligarchy in the expectation, rising at length to a certainty, that the time would come when the cup of Boer iniquity would be full and the Home Government be forced to reverse the Gladstonian policy".³⁸

The third figure deserving of some attention was Captain W S Bigby, secretary of the NRU in 1902. He is a more shadowy individual. Bigby was a magistrate and military man. Later, as a senior member of the Attorney General's office, he gained fame amongst settlers in 1907 when he assisted in the prosecution of King Dinuzulu on charges of treason after the Bambatha rising. His conduct in this case was so biased that Dinuzulu lodged an appeal against Bigby. The appeal failed, although the Court did concede that Bigby was prone to inappropriate displays of temper in his dealings with Dinuzulu and his counsel. It also later transpired that Bigby terrorised his own (African) witnesses in this case.³⁹

Despite Bigby's hostility towards the Colony's blacks, at least the disobedient ones, he was able to see the merits of 'the noble savage' and to evoke it for publicity purposes when the occasion demanded. In 1903 a touring British XV came to Natal. The NRU was galvanized into action. A British Team Entertainment Committee was established which then created a 'Zulu War Dance

37 Pietermaritzburg College Magazine, 111, 26, June 1908, 17-24.

38 Haw and Frame, 1988, 132; NT 86, T4003/190, note from Superintendent of Education, n.d.; PM 34, 1902/3397, Stalker to Hime, p1 of enclosed pamphlet.

39 AGO 1/9/32, 20 A/1907; AGO 1/9/32, 21 A/1907; Marks, 1970, 147, 266. A reminder of the close similarity between the racial views and dealings of senior rugby men is to be found in the conduct of Arthur Hime who was appointed to represent the interests of Cakijana, a prominent 1906 rebel. His client specifically requested that restraining orders preventing him from being in Pietermaritzburg and giving attention to his own defence be challenged. Hime refused to heed the request (Marks, 1970, 277).

and Picnic Sub Committee', of which Bigby was the secretary. The highlight of the British team's visit to Pietermaritzburg was to watch "a Zulu War-Dance"!⁴⁰

The spread of the game's popularity was apparent in the countryside. In many of the small midland towns old boys from the rugby-playing schools raised their own teams to play the first XVs of their alma maters. In addition there were the annual games of 'Past' v 'Present'. These not only consolidated a class always threatened by geography and sparse demography, but it also ensured that generational conflict was accommodated within the confines of a sport which stressed team work. Sons might feel frustrated with their fathers, resentful of having to work the farm, aggrieved that elder siblings had gotten a better deal, yet rugby provided a code where the game eclipsed all. Here, before, during and after the game, the love of the sport and the affirmation of male physical power, underscored that what they shared was their masculinity.⁴¹

CONCLUSION

By 1920 rugby was much more than a leisure time activity. It was a highly structured social institution. It was no longer limited geographically to Pietermaritzburg and environs, or socially to posh schools boys and ONF men. Rugby had become a symbol of white male success, exuberance, athleticism, solidity. In this, it had succeeded in spreading hegemonic class and masculine values through the colony. Along the way, a distinction had been created between itself and soccer. The emphasis on racial unity amongst whites meant that since many white boys continued to play soccer in the towns, the denigration of soccer as working class activity was not absolute.

40 KCM 89/3/B1, Natal Rugby Union Minute Book, Meeting of the British Team Entertainment (Sub) Committee of NRU, 22 July 1903; Committee Meeting, 7 August 1903, 63.

41 *S. Michael's Chronicle*, II, 5, October 1905, 30 It should be noted that these games also kept Natal's politicians and their families in the game. In a game at Michaelhouse in 1907, for example, A H Winter, the son of H D Winter (Minister of Agriculture), and the nephews of the Prime Minister, Sir F R Moor, were amongst those that played against the schoolboy First XV. *S. Michael's Chronicle*, II, 8, June 1907, 20.

Chapter 5 Clubs, Societies and Secret Orders

The institutions discussed in this chapter were responsible for reproducing the class to which the midland farmers belonged, for providing it with internal cohesion, for integrating it across districts, across the town-country divide, and across professions. They were also responsible for creating the myth of the ONFs, for establishing a gendered representation of the class which concealed its internal contradictions by presenting to the outside world a picture of order and cohesion. This was achieved in part, by excluding people who were either not of the class, or who were a threat to the image that the class was presenting.

The clubs are important because they represent a form of social power. As Bob Connell reminds us, social power has a multiple character. It can take the form of naked force (see chapter 6) but is also more subtle. It can be, for example, "a balance of advantage or an inequality of resources in a workplace, a household, or a larger institution" (Connell, 1987, 107). In the clubs, the exercise of power took two forms, one secret, the other subtle. The operation of the old boy network was basically an informal and often secret affair (discussed in section 3 below). The development of class codes of behaviour was subtle (discussed in section 4), being articulated in non-verbal terms and understood only by those on the inside.

The clubs provided continuity between the juvenile world of school and the adult world of work and leisure time use. On leaving school, boys often joined the old boys' society. This projected the power of the schools (identified in chapter 3) into wider society. The old boys' societies and other clubs also served as entry points and locations for social mixing. By joining a club, a man confirmed his racial and class belonging. He might also thereby, move up the social ladder - clubs were a means of upward mobility. ONFs joined clubs as a matter of course. They used clubs to foster networks, to forge links with the urban elites and to spread the family name. Beyond this instrumentality, men joined and frequented clubs to associate with men, to play card games, to drink, read journals and newspapers and to discuss politics. These were considered to be masculine pursuits. Within the clubs was developed a 'politics of taste' which marked class and intra-class boundaries. The politics of taste, discussed in section 1 below, acted in concert with the variety of other mechanisms discussed in this thesis, to distinguish (to make distinct, to give distinction to) the ONFs from others social classes.

The importance of clubs in a colonial context has been acknowledged in East Africa (Kennedy, 1987, 180; Berman and Lonsdale, 1990, 138) There, according to Kennedy, they served to assimilate white immigrants into settler society. In the process they disseminated a set of norms and ensured (by taking measures against transgressors) that these norms were honoured. He notes that despite appearing to be "virtually classless collectives of immigrants" (Kennedy, 1987, 183), the clubs were very hierarchical. Class differences were concealed by common racial identity, but "social fraternization was not synonymous with social equality" (Kennedy, 1987, 183). The analysis of clubs in this chapter endorses, but qualifies, Kennedy's interpretation, but goes further in showing how the clubs functioned to promote settler power and settler masculinity.

In this chapter, three different types of club will be discussed. Old boys' clubs were created to serve the school and to spread its influence. These clubs made it possible for links forged at school to be maintained into adult life. The Victoria Club was a leisure club, a gentleman's

club, designed to serve a group with the highest social aspirations. Membership of the Victoria Club marked one as a leading member of society. Freemasons belonged to a secret order. Membership was not confined to specific classes. Any white male could join, and the criteria of admission was moral standing, itself an aspect in the politics of distinction. The clubs were all-male, racially exclusive institutions. In this respect they mirrored the gendered form of the social institutions already discussed.

The clubs examined here represent just some of the diverse forms which such institutions took. In Natal there was a mania for clubs. For example, within the military, regimental associations were established to provide a locale for recreation for members and their families, as well as watering holes for men when not on duty. Rifle associations, religious and dramatic organisations and a wide variety of sports clubs could be found in even the smallest midland hamlet. Most adult ONF men would belong to a number of clubs. Many, for example, would belong to their old boys' club and the freemasons, though the exclusivity of the Victoria Club meant that only a small proportion, the pinnacle of ONF society, was admitted to that club. Farmers distant from Pietermaritzburg and the larger towns, were less likely to be members of the clubs discussed here. They were likely to be more dependent on extended family for company and support. The improvement of transport in the twentieth century allowed farmers from remote areas to make better use of the clubs (Kimber interview, 1994).

Three types of theory are employed in this chapter. The importance of social networks in maintaining class power (as described in chapter 1) informs the examination of clubs in sections 2 and 3. The inspiration for the analysis of club codes comes from Pierre Bourdieu, the French sociologist. He has written, amongst other things, extensively on culture and the power of language. In this chapter his discussions on the production and function of distinction will be utilized to understand how the values of the clubs operated as mechanisms of exclusion and inclusion. The third theoretical support is discussed in section 5 where the nature of male friendships is analysed. Here I draw on the men's studies literature.

Section 1 Club membership, Distinction and the Politics of Taste

In becoming a member of a club a man became classified. He gained an additional identity. This was important because classifications work to mobilize social groups. When we categorize, we include members who then identify themselves as belonging to that group. Similarly, when we categorize someone as belonging, at the same time we categorize people as not belonging.

[W]hat individuals and groups invest in the particular meaning they give to common classificatory systems by the use they make of them is infinitely more than their 'interes' in the usual sense of the term; it is their whole social being, everything which defines their own idea of themselves, the primordial, tacit contract whereby they define 'us' as opposed to 'them', 'other people', and which is the basis of the exclusions ('not for the likes of us') and inclusions they perform. (Bourdieu, 1984, 478).

Once classified, a member has certain attributes bestowed upon him. "Attributes, in the sense of predicates, thereby become **attributions**, powers, capacities, privileges, prerogatives, attributed to the holder of a post" (Bourdieu, 1984, 480). Under these circumstances, it is not surprising that the limits of the classification system "are frontiers to be attacked or defended with all one's strength" (Bourdieu, 1984, 477).

A group becomes a group when a spokesperson, "speaking on behalf of a group, surreptitiously posits the existence of the group in question, institutes the group through that magical operation which is inherent in any act of naming" (Bourdieu 1991, 250). This process of collective representation imposes "the representation of their existence and their unity, both on their own members and on other groups" (Bourdieu, 1984, 480-1). It also, however, produces fine gradations between members themselves. These are also relations of power, designed to extend the notion of hierarchy implicit in the construction of the group in the first place.

One of the major devices by which the group's existence is confirmed is the construction of an aesthetic and a normative code of behaviour. Bourdieu calls this the politics of taste.

Taste classifies, and it classifies the classifier. Social subjects, classified by their classifications, distinguish themselves by the distinctions they make, between the beautiful and the ugly, the distinguished and the vulgar. (Bourdieu, 1984, 6)

But what is taste? "Taste is an acquired disposition to 'differentiate' and 'appreciate'". Taste is exercised in what Bourdieu calls schemes of habitus.¹ The habitus is a place (not in the spatial sense) where the various strands of a class persona are woven together "into the biographically synthesizing unity". The class persona is constrained "by the material conditions of existence (whose efficacy is more or less subordinated to the effects of the training previously undergone as one advances in time). It is embodied class (including biological properties that are socially shaped, such as sex or age) - and, in all cases of inter- or intra-generational mobility, it is distinguished (in its effects) from class as objectified at a given moment (in the form of property, titles etc.), inasmuch as it perpetuates a different state of the material conditions of existence" (Bourdieu, 1984, 444). Habitus is also "a set of **dispositions** which incline agents to act and react in certain ways" (Bourdieu, 1991, 12). "Dispositions are acquired through a gradual process of **inculcation** in which early childhood experiences are particularly important ... The dispositions produced ... are also **structured** in the sense that they unavoidably reflect the social conditions within which they were acquired" (Bourdieu, 1991, 13).

Schemes of habitus "embed what some would mistakenly call **values** in the most automatic gestures or the apparently most insignificant techniques of the body - ways of walking or blowing one's nose, ways of eating or talking Taste is a practical mastery of distributions which makes it possible to sense or intuit what is likely (or unlikely) to befall - and therefore to befit - an individual occupying a given position in social space" (Bourdieu, 1984, 466).

Taste is central to what Bourdieu calls symbolic capital. This chapter focuses on symbolic capital as an explicit attempt to move away from reductionist arguments which establish close economic ties between cultural class locations and accumulation. It must be remembered, however, that Bourdieu understands class in terms of other capitals too: educational, economic and cultural. Symbolic capital does not sit alone, it is propped up and complemented by the other capitals, yet is not reducible to them.

Symbolic capital - another name for distinction - is nothing other than capital, of whatever kind, when it is perceived by an agent endowed with categories of perception arising from the incorporation of the structure of its distribution i.e. when it is known and recognized as self-evident. Distinctions, as symbolic transformations of **de facto** differences, and, more generally, the ranks, orders, grades and all the other symbolic hierarchies,

¹ Bourdieu is not alone in making the argument that taste is a social construction, that it is not 'natural'. Edward Said, for example, analyses authority in the same way: as not "mysterious or natural ... It is formed, irradiated, disseminated; it is instrumental, it is persuasive; it has status, it establishes canons of taste and value" (Said, 1978, 19).

are the product of the application of schemes of construction which ... are the product of the incorporation of the very structures to which they are applied; and recognition of the most absolute legitimacy is nothing other than an apprehension of the everyday social world as taken for granted, an apprehension which results from the almost perfect coincidence of objective structures and incorporated structures. (Bourdieu, 1991, 238)

People acquiring taste, according to Bourdieu, actively produce exclusion, actively operationalise mechanisms of inclusion and exclusion.

"The denial of lower, coarse, vulgar, venal, servile ... implies an affirmation of the superiority of those who can be satisfied with the sublimated, refined, disinterested, gratuitous, distinguished pleasures forever closed to the profane. That is why art and cultural consumption are predisposed, consciously and deliberately or not, to fulfil a social function of legitimating social differences" (Bourdieu, 1991, 7).

It is therefore "the judge of taste (a)s the supreme manifestation of the discernment which, by reconciling reason and sensibility ... defines the accomplished individual". "[U]pperclass propriety ... treats taste as one of the surest signs of true nobility" (Bourdieu, 1991, 11).

Taste is developed both within the context of family and the school system. And the more it is encompassed by the schooling system, and the stronger the schooling system becomes, the more pervasive is taste as a sign of distinction. Taste becomes not just a secret sign of recognition (a "landmark or insignia" (Bourdieu, 1984, 451)) amongst 'true nobility', it becomes incorporated into wider society and becomes hegemonic. Underscoring this, Bourdieu quotes Virginia Woolf: 'General ideas are always generals' ideas' (Bourdieu, 1984, 444).

Despite his sophistication, Bourdieu does not escape the binary opposite of ruling class and dominated class. Taste always operates functionally to exclude and include, to locate people towards one or other pole. In this sense, Bourdieu also slides towards reductionism, seeing taste always as a relationship of power, reducing it (with however much sophistication) to a reflex of deep class or life origin. His schema thus has limitations in examining intra-class forces and relations, because he tends to reduce these to movements towards one or other of the binary poles. A different understanding of taste, in this case the masculinist distinction of honour, offered by Robert Nye assists in breaking down the seamless, contradictory-less surface of Bourdieu's analysis.² Nye stresses the significance of social minutiae and the relations of power which underpin them, but shows that power is not a one-way relationship and that the French code of honour (examined in chapter 6) did not just act against the excluded, women or the working class, but could be tyrannical for those who actually subscribed to it. The **ensemble** of formal and informal codes that regulated the relations between bourgeois men did so in "both prosaic and life-threatening matters" (Nye, 1992, 127-8).

2 In the debate around understandings of 'The Patriarchal Law', feminist Judith Butler has attempted to get away from seeing it as purely a discourse of repression. Her view is that it is a system that makes certain things possible, that produces other as mirror of same and which throws up contradictions. She thus avoids the linear, bipolar tendencies inherent in Bourdieu's work (Butler, 1990, Footnote 52 at 156).

Section 2 The Clubs and their Members

Old boys' societies were a common feature of the British public schools upon which the midland schools modelled themselves. John Honey points out that in the second half of the nineteenth century the public schools created the idea of the 'old boy' which bound the alumnus to the school for his entire life via old boys' societies, annual dinners and competitive games. "Probably in no other country in the world has the conception of the 'school' been so fully and so powerfully developed, to the point of creating an institution of enormous pretensions and self-consciousness, ready to take upon itself tasks in relation not just to the formal schooling but to the whole lives of the pupils" (Honey, 1987, 155). Within the empire, schools following the metropolitan elite model also developed such societies (Daly, 1988, 166).

OLD BOYS' SOCIETIES

Hilton College was the first to form an old boys' society. In 1892 masters and former pupils came together to found the Hiltonian Society. Its object was to maintain "during the years of early manhood ties of friendship and intimacy formed at school, and keeping past Hiltonians in close touch with the Hilton of the present".³ It immediately drew up a constitution which set out the goals and rules more fully. "To associate for mutual aid and encouragement Hiltonians who seek to advance the work of Hilton, both in the School and in the Colony at large". According to the rules, a member had "to do all in his power to help any fellow member who may need help, particularly one with whom he is at school or with whom he is in correspondence".⁴

Meetings were held quarterly and large amounts of energy were spent on refining procedures, especially rules of debate and procedure. In addition it was agreed that members should identify themselves by a silver fleur de lys badge worn on a watch chain. The rationale was clearly stated: "It is desirable that some distinctive badge should be chosen which members who wish to do so can wear, that after leaving school members may be able at once to recognise other members".⁵

The society was successful. Membership rose rapidly. At the first annual general meeting in 1895, headmaster Ellis's speech included the following self-congratulation. "We have kept together so far, and if we continue to keep together, always enlarging our borders, we may look forward to the time, not a very distant one, when we shall fulfil the hope our President expressed at our foundation, and become a political and a social force in Natal".⁶ A close watch was kept on the fortunes of old boys, this being the barometer of school success.

Membership was limited to old boys at an annual subscription of 5 shillings. A vetting process ensured that not all were admitted. Some men applying for membership had only been at the school for a short time, often having been forced to leave when the school became unaffordable. The idea that the society should be held worthy by those to whom it belonged and the fear that it would be abused by undeserving n'er-do-wells caused admissions procedures to be tightened. In 1897 the minutes reflect this trend. "If every member exerts himself to introduce his old school chums whom he knows to be worthy, we ought soon to

3 Hilton College Archive, Hiltonian Society minute book.

4 Hilton College Archive, Constitution of the Hiltonian Society.

5 Hilton College Archive, Hiltonian Society minute book, general meeting 16 April 1893.

6 Hilton College Archive, Hiltonian Society minute book, annual general meeting, 24 May 1895.

form as powerful a society as any in Natal. But we must of course be careful as to whom we admit. For this reason the Council has decided that all proposals for admission of local men must be approved by Local Committees before being submitted to the Council".⁷

In 1898 the Hiltonian society had 164 members and was active enough to have its own rugby club in Pietermaritzburg.⁸ The South African war did little to slow its impetus. It provided an instance of how successful the society was in transcending political partisanship. In one case, the former pupil Uys, retained his links with school despite being on active service with the boers. This was held to be evidence of the supreme success of the Society. "M J Uys, an old boy fighting on the Boer side, had managed to communicate to Mr Ellis the death of Erasmus (another old boy) at Pretoria".⁹

In 1901 the society launched The Hiltonian to chronicle "the doings of Hilton and Hiltonians".¹⁰ Just over a year later, in 1903, 140 old boys founded a limited liability company and purchased the school and its estate from Ellis for £10 000 (Nuttall, 1972, 31). From this point on, Hilton's old boys would have a tight grip on the affairs of the school.

The Hiltonian Society continued to be active, arranging balls, dinners and sporting events. It attracted such notable Hiltonians as H A Hime to the office of Chairman (in 1905) and offered honorary membership to prominent locals such as the Dean of Pietermaritzburg. It extended its influence by establishing local committees from London to Salisbury and from Johannesburg to Durban. The recession in the late 1900s slowed progress for the first time. An annual dance was called off for lack of interest, though membership remained just below the 300 mark.¹¹ In 1927 membership stood at 1200 members.¹²

At the time that Hilton was spreading its influence via its old boys, Maritzburg College was going through a lean patch. Its pupil numbers fell below 50 in 1893 (Haw and Frame, 1988, 126). In 1896, however, it established the Old Boys' Association. It was expected that 500 would join but by 1898 there were only 30 members (Haw and Frame, 1988, 146). The association found it difficult to induce old boys to become members and reduced subscriptions to encourage more enthusiasm. Little however came of this. The old boys' dinner was held most years but this was the only activity of note. As the editor of the school magazine noted, this was "very unfortunate because the Annual Old Boys' Dinner is one of the chief means of keeping Old Boys in touch with the school and its doings".¹³ MC's association remained ineffectual until after the First World war despite having men such as Sir Henry Bale (former Attorney General, Minister of Education and Chief Justice) as honorary president (in 1909). It was resuscitated in 1921 and kicked off its new life by raising money for a war monument (Haw and Frame, 1988, 219).

Within four years of being founded, the headmaster of Michaelhouse (James Todd) called for an Old Boys' Club to be established. Three years later, in 1903, this was achieved. Membership was limited to boys who had been at the school for at least two years. Subscriptions were 7/6 per annum or 5 guineas for life. The constitution outlined its purposes: to "promote friendly

7 Hilton College Archive, Hiltonian Society minute book, annual report, 3 July 1897.

8 Hilton College Archive, Hiltonian Society minute book, annual report, 28 June 1898.

9 Hilton College Archive, Hiltonian Society minute book, annual meeting, 20 December 1900.

10 Hilton College Archive, Hiltonian Society minute book, annual report 27 January 1902.

11 Hilton College Archive, Hiltonian Society minute book, half yearly meeting, 9 May 1908.

12 Hilton Archive Depot, Hiltonian Society minute book (2), annual report for year ending 31 August 1927. The minute book from 1911 to 1926 has been lost.

13 Pietermaritzburg College Magazine, 1, 6, March 1901, 10.

intercourse among Old Boys, to organise them for sport, to help Old Boys in pecuniary distress and to further the interests of Michaelhouse" (Barratt, 1969, 184). The headmaster was also the head of the club but the early committees boasted prominent old boys such as the Estcourt farmer, C F Moor and lawyer, C E Tatham.¹⁴ The school magazine, which came out regularly, gave a full account of the achievements of old boys, thus breathing life into the club. As with Hilton, there was an active old boy's branch in London. From 1909 annual dinners were held. These frequently coincided with sports matches against such old rivals as Hilton, MC and DHS. As with all old boys' societies, such events were marked by hearty self-congratulation. In 1909 the headmaster addressed the 20 old boys who came to the dinner: "He did not wish to make odious comparisons, but he might say that for themselves at least Michaelhouse was the best school in the Colony. Michaelhouse was, for them, too sacred to allow any other school to compete for their affections. ... The school had been founded on English public school ideals".¹⁵ Michaelhouse differed from Hilton in that many of its old boys were resident in Durban. In 1913 the decision was taken to elect a Durbanite as president, acknowledging this fact, though functions continued by and large to be held at the school or in Pietermaritzburg.

THE VICTORIA CLUB

The Victoria Club was founded in Pietermaritzburg in 1859. It is not easy to get a sense of its history because the society has always been closed and its dealings have been behind closed doors. Its close cousin, Johannesburg's Rand Club, puts into words what the Victoria Club prefers to keep unspoken. "Committees have always disliked any reference to it in the newspapers; and all references to its doings were followed by an effort to discover the source of the publicity and by a reminder to the offender that it was the unwritten law of the Rand Club that its proceedings were never to be reported" (Neame, 1957, 1).

The founder of the club was Lushington Phillips, a High Court Judge, who was very active in public circles. Amongst other things he was president of the Pietermaritzburg Agricultural Society which hosted the Royal Show. Hattersley describes Phillips as a "man of imposing physique and forceful personality, Phillips was immensely popular in Natal .. (and a) noted marksman and excellent horseman" (Hattersley, 1959, 17). He used the courtroom to make moral pronouncements. Frequently these echoed his particular understanding of what it was to be a real man. In one case he sentenced a prisoner with the words that he had "never, in his experience on the Bench, heard of a more dastardly, unmanly or cowardly assault" (Spiller, 1986, 71). He was not a stranger to controversy. He was forthright in his opinion both in the court and out. He was sued by Philip Allen, the Colonial Treasurer, for libel after he had accused the former of dishonesty (Hattersley, 1959, 24).

The men who launched the club along with Phillips were mostly Pietermaritzburg residents drawn from the senior echelons of colonial society - mainly the judiciary and government. Amongst their number was Colonial Secretary Erskine, Theophilus Shepstone of Native Affairs and Colonial Treasurer Allen. Foundation members included a few of voortrekker stock (P A R Otto and P H Zeederberg ("reputedly (the club's) most wealthy member" (Hattersley, 1959, 25)), lawyers, civil servants and merchants.

It was from its conception a "gentleman's club" with accommodation, coffee, billiards, a news room and a high annual subscription of 5 guineas plus same amount for entrance fee (Hattersley, 1959, 14). In Cape Town the equivalent club had been sharply divided on the issue of the admissibility of commercial men. As in Britain merchants and businessmen were

14 *S. Michael's Chronicle*, II, 5, October 1905, 40.

15 *S. Michael's Chronicle*, II, 12, June 1909, 17.

considered too low for admission to status as gentlemen. In Natal, the white population was small and socially and ethnically heterogeneous, so such debates did not occur. Needless to say, there were no black or female members.

Club membership was always exclusive, but changed over time. Initially most members came from Pietermaritzburg though "a narrow circle of executive officials and .. the regimental officers who formed the immediate entourage of the lieutenant-governor" formed the influential core" (Hattersley, 1959, 44). The professional and commercial classes began to assert themselves in the 1890s and by the end of the 1920s most new club members were businessmen. For most of this time, the connections with the military remained close, especially with the garrison. A special regimental subscription entitled all commissioned officers to honorary membership (Hattersley, 1959, 35). During war time, these ties were extended and strengthened. Only wealthy farmers who had political or business interests in Pietermaritzburg were members in the early days. For example, farmer politicians (like Charles Barter) and farmer businessmen (like G M Sutton) were members. Continuity in membership was ensured by the practice of a family being able to retain its membership by passing it on to the son after the death of the father (Tatham interview, 1994).

The club was run by a committee which in the early days was dominated by legal and military types. One its most impressive (but by no means atypical) chairmen was Ashe Windham, magistrate of Greytown and first commander of the Umvoti Mounted Rifles who presided in the late 1880s. The prominent Hime family was also well represented on the committee as were most of the ministers of government. These included farmer politicians, T K Murray, G M Sutton and E M Greene. The military were heavily represented with many senior officers (mostly from the Natal Carbineers) on the committee - eg C E Taunton (Michaelhouse old boy), and G J Macfarlane. The most eminent legal men of the colony regularly were elected to the committee, including F S Tatham¹⁶ and advocates like Fergus Hathorn. Even when the membership was changing, the committee remained dominated by the founding elite. "Men like Henrique Shepstone and Arthur Hime, who were forced to resign from executive office, found themselves with more leisure at their disposal, a notable portion of which they were ready to devote to the Club's affairs" (Hattersley, 1959, 44). In 1913 Shepstone ceased being chair and professional men for the first time began to dominate the committee. This coincided with the declining importance of the senior bureaucrats whose political influence had been profoundly reduced by Union.

In 1895 the club bought its present site, having rented up until this time. With the erection of a permanent clubhouse, the heyday of the club dawned. "Though the Victoria was never a political club, its relations with the colonial parliament were always intimate. From early days members of the legislative council had sought membership in order to secure comfortable quarters and congenial company during sessions. Receptions were held and dinners given, not only by the Club as a corporate body, but by the members of the legislature when Council was sitting" (Hattersley, 1959, 30). It is difficult, on the basis of this evidence, to make a statement about the influence of the club on colonial politics. It was certainly the case that most of the senior government ministers right up until Union were members. It is also highly likely that they discussed politics and developed political strategies. The consequences of the social location of the club will be examined in the following two sections.

16 F S Tatham's brother, Charles, married Lily Leuchars, cousin of George Leuchars, Greytown farmer and commander of the Natal Carbineers. Among Tatham's numerous cousins and uncles were Pietermaritzburg lawyers, colonial land surveyors and midland farmers. The family was steeped in a military tradition, with most of the men serving in the Natal Carbineers (Tatham, n/d).

THE FREEMASONS

The third society which this chapter focuses on is the freemasonry. Of all societies, the freemasonry is amongst the oldest and the most secret (Knight, 1984, Cooper, 1986). Its cause and operation is widely regarded with suspicion though its influence, for want of evidence in this regard, is difficult to determine. As with the Victoria Club, freemasonry attempted to keep out of the public eye, and expected of masons who inadvertently came under its gaze, to stand down rather than tarnish its name.¹⁷

Two recent accounts of freemasonry argue for their influence beyond crude instrumentality. Rich (1992) argues that the close association of freemason lodges with public schools facilitated the transmission of imperialist rituals throughout the empire. In turn, these rituals supported an almost absurd self-confidence amongst the public school freemasons themselves, while providing aspirant elites in the colonies with an inappropriate model after which to aspire.¹⁸ Van Dülmen (1992) argues that the importance of freemasonry in Europe was that it was part of a modernist challenge to a religious and secular status quo which upheld the authority of the church, royal families and landed elites. The emphasis on rationality and free association were, according to van Dülmen, critical in producing an intellectual and social climate for the construction of a modernist political order. In this chapter this direction of enquiry will be followed in the hope of demonstrating the contribution of freemasonry to the development of unequal, hierarchical and sexist relations in the Colony.¹⁹

The major secondary source on South African freemasonry, is A A Cooper's 1986 work. Cooper, himself a freemason, charts the development of lodges throughout South Africa. He makes little assessment of the social or political impact of freemasons and takes at face value the freemasonry's own statements about their doings.²⁰ In short, his study accepts that the two major goals of the freemasons are to assist its own members and to spread higher moral values through teaching.

The first lodge to be established in South Africa was set up in the Cape in 1772 (Cooper, 1986, 16). Natal's first lodge was established in Durban in 1858. Pietermaritzburg's first lodge, the Prince Alfred Lodge opened in 1864 (Russell, 1885, 22). Progress was initially rapid, but with the depression of the late 1860s non-paying members were 'erased' (the freemason term for terminating membership and/or expelling members). This was only a slight hiccup, for in 1877 and 1878 Pietermaritzburg gained another two lodges while the Carnarvon Lodge was established in Richmond (Russell, 1885, 44, 45, 47). In 1880 and 1881 the freemasons stretched their influence to Greytown and Kokstad respectively (Anon, 1916, 7). These lodges were all of the English constitution. Pietermaritzburg gained its first Scottish lodge (St Andrew) in 1884 (Alexander, 1947?, 9).

After the South African war freemasonry (English constitution) experienced rapid growth. The number of lodges increased from 18 (1898) to 27 (1906) and membership rose from 787 to 1368 (Cooper, 1986, 92). In the same period, Scottish lodges proliferated even more quickly.

17 *The South African Freemason*, 5, 1892, 240.

18 I have not found evidence of the public school/freemason connection beyond a computer reference to an Old Etonian branch in Durban in 1922. Unfortunately the file on this branch could not be located by Pretoria Archive staff. CAD, GG 1703, 7/71.

19 In a recent article on late nineteenth and early twentieth century Cape society, it is argued that amongst other organisations, the freemasonry was critical in supporting an imperial, modernist project which was underpinned by notions of class and racial superiority (Merrington, 1995).

20 Cooper acknowledges that freemasons held high government positions which "enabled them to predispose the administration in favour of the Craft." Sir Hercules Robinson, Cape governor in the 1880s, Sir Richard Southey, Cape Colonial Secretary (1860s-1870s), Louis Botha, Field Marshal Lord Roberts, Commander-in-chief for SA (1900-1902) and Lord Kitchener, Chief of Staff to Roberts were all senior Freemasons (Cooper, 1986, 38, 48, 64). Quite what the implications of these overlapping positions was, is not further explained.

Lodges developed at Dundee (1903), Ladysmith (1904), Weenen county (1905), Maritzburg county (1905) and Mooi River (1914). The lodges sprang up along the major transport routes to the interior, drawing in men not of the landed classes but of the business and artisan classes (Alexander, 1947?, 25, 26, 35). Frequently these lodges drew together white men who were bound together by professional or institutional location. Newcastle's Coronation Lodge, for example, was dominated by employees of the coal mines, iron foundry and railways while Durban's Thistle Lodge was made up largely of Natal Government Railway employees (Cooper, 1986, 93). Another depression (which began in 1906) reduced numbers: in 1906 in the English lodges, 68 members were erased and 135 resigned (Cooper, 1986, 94).

The membership of lodges varied a great deal. Historically, freemasonry in Europe primarily attracted the intellectual middle class while also gaining support amongst landed elites (van Dülmen, 1992, 55). In Natal, this pattern seems initially to have existed. Many of the early lodges were founded and headed by senior civil servants including school masters and magistrates. The Tathams, Edmund and Robert, for example, joined in 1860 (Russell, 1884, 12-13). As with the Victoria Club, lodges attracted a large following among the military as well (McIntyre, 1935, 30). Another notable pattern was the overlap between freemasons and those prominent later in promoting the sport of rugby. Here the Durban families of Bigby and Beningfield (the former a prosecutor, the latter a JP) deserve mention (see chapter 4)).²¹ Another freemason with strong rugby connections was C W P Douglas de Fenzi (see chapter 4). We know more about Douglas de Fenzi than many other masons though I suspect that his position was typical. His father (of German birth, but a British subject) came to South Africa as a professional soldier in 1860 to serve on the Kei River Frontier. Hereafter he unsuccessfully attempted farming and then failed to get employment that would support his lifestyle.²² Charles William Perks Douglas de Fenzi, his son or nephew, received a public school education before coming to Natal in 1881. He became an active member of the civil service (clerk of the Legislative Council in 1893) and the freemasonry. In the latter institution he was chair of the St Andrews lodge in Pietermaritzburg (1904) and rose to become district grand secretary for Natal (Anon, 1909, 14). In the military sphere he was very active as well, being a Lieutenant in NRR.²³ Douglas de Fenzi was single (he married only in 1916), without land or independent means, but with the advantages of military connections (through his father/uncle) and a public school background. These appear to have been enough to make him into an influential person in the colony. He was a very energetic protagonist of rugby in the colony and rubbed shoulders with senior members of government. He was cited in *Natal's Who's Who* for 1906. Within freemasonry, his energies are noted with approval by chroniclers. He was an originator, for example of the Natal Scottish Benevolent Fund in 1904 (Alexander, 1947?, 23). Douglas de Fenzi represented the new brand of freemason. A man with impeccable credentials, a man without much money, a man looking for contacts and a way into the white, colonial establishment. From the 1890s onward, it was this kind of person who dominated membership, not the colonial elites who had been more notable in the earlier period.

Membership included prominent men but "[a]ll social classes" were represented.²⁴ Generally, the older English constitution lodges attracted members who were better-off, while the Scottish

21 Samuel Francis Beningfield was one of the first freemasons in Natal, being a junior deacon in Durban in 1858 (Russell, 1884, 6). He was appointed a JP in 1894. His sons and grandsons achieved fame in Natal. Reuben founded the Natal Field Artillery, and his six sons excelled at sport. They attended Maritzburg College, Weenen County College and the English public school, Lancing. Cyril James, was perhaps the best known. He farmed sugar and later became an auctioneer. He was renowned for his all-round sporting skills, playing representative cricket and soccer. He was also very competitive at athletics, tennis, rowing and yachting (Natal, *Index to the Government Gazette for the Year ended December 31, 1894*, 211. Gordon, 1988, 16-18; *Cape Times*, n/d, 239). Frederick Thomas Bigby became a freemason in 1862 (Russell, 1884, 18). His son, Captain W S Bigby, was a magistrate and secretary of the Natal Rugby Union from 1902.

22 CAAD, CO 4146, 88; CO 4151, 180.

23 *Natal's Who's Who, 1906*.

24 *The South African Freemason*, 2, 1889, 122.

constitution lodges, many formed around the turn of the century, attracted many artisans and skilled working people.

The allure of freemasonry attracted the interest of whites who had few social pretensions and hoped that racial solidarity would secure their inclusion, and the order's influence would ensure their prosperity. This could produce difficult situations which went quite contrary to freemasonry's stress on secrecy and procedure. A rare public example was a letter from James Bray to the Governor General, Lord Gladstone.

Will it please you: your most Excellency that your servant request of your kind Excellency to let me join on to some Lodge of Freemasons. I wish to be a Freemason and to get to this stage I must ask your Excellency to advance me the necessary admittance fee, and that your Excellency introduce me to an Good Christian Order.²⁵ LJ_46

The social composition of Natal's lodges reflected the interest of the white working class in freemasonry. Durban's Scottish Caledonia Lodge, for example, included a jockey, clerks, bricklayers, railway workers, carpenters, engravers, shopkeepers, labour agents and engineers (Cooper, 1986, 93). The understanding that white men had something in common, regardless of class, made such polyglot membership possible. But problems also resulted. In the industrial unrest of 1913 and 1914, some freemasons in the Transvaal joined the strikers. They were admonished that this was not the way to go: the mason has a "bounden duty to assuage, to pacify and advocate constitutional means of obtaining redress of would-be

grievances".²⁶ LJ_46

Rules existed precisely to prevent the dilution of membership with socially inappropriate men. It was a source of concern to the early leaders of freemasonry in Natal that such rules were not closely adhered to. As the movement developed, stricter application of rules, particularly of the non-payment of subscription clauses, ensured that the status of membership was elevated. At the same time, freemasonry's emphasis on support for brothers in distress, saw increasing amounts of money being channelled to widowers or financially embarrassed members (Russell, 1884, 52).

The leadership of freemasonry in Natal was dominated throughout the nineteenth century by expatriates. These were men in senior and influential government positions. The founder of the first lodge in Durban is a good example. Henry J Mellor was resident magistrate of Durban and a founder member of the Durban Rifle Guard, the first volunteer unit in Natal (Anon, 1958, 4). Lushington Phillips, High Court judge and founder of the Victoria Club, was Worshipful Master (head) of the Prince Alfred Lodge in 1883-4 (Russell, 1885, 63). When Natal became a freemason district (English Constitution) Robert Finnemore, a JP and Durban's resident magistrate, became the district grand master. Peter Spiller describes Finnemore as a "popular prosecutor" who had served competently in almost every department of the Natal government. He was also secretary of the Pietermaritzburg Agricultural Society from 1879 to 1880. He later joined the Supreme Court Bench (Anon, 1916, 6; Gordon, 1984, 131; Spiller, 1986, 50). The equivalent Scottish Grand Lodge was formed in 1897. Its first Grand Master was Robert Douglas Clark, headmaster of Maritzburg College (Alexander, 1947?, 1) (see chapter 3). Clark was a member of the Victoria Club. It was only in 1921 when Natal-born Hugh M Thompson became District Grand Master that the domination of expatriates was ended (Alexander, 1947?, 48). Throughout this period, farmers maintained their involvement with freemasonry.

25 CAD, GG 1184, 28/129, James Bray to Lord Gladstone, 18 June 1912.

26 B M Vogts, Provincial Grand Master for Dutch Lodges in Transvaal cited in Cooper, 1986, 123.

Farmers in remote districts found the demands of membership (eg attending meetings) difficult to meet, but concessions were made to them. The Ixopo branch, for example, held its meetings according to the lunar calendar, so that members could ride back to their farms by moonlight.²⁷

The most obvious and significant fact about the three institutions under examination is that they shared a huge overlap in membership. The three clubs under discussion had no formal ties, yet the extent of shared membership suggests that they were closely associated with one another. Apart from those already mentioned, Lloyd Evans Mesham was a freemason and a leader within the Victoria Club. Barns, headmaster of Maritzburg College, headed the school's old boys' society, was a Victoria Club member as well as a freemason. A W S Brown, headmaster at Michaelhouse was a Victoria Club member and headed his school's old boy's association. And there were prominent connections with the military too. Major T Menne, was commanding officer of the Umvoti Mounted Rifle (1892-8).²⁸ He was also Worshipful Master of the Umvoti Lodge in 1886 (Anon, 1916, 38-9). Similarly, the Regimental Sergeant Major of NC, William Burkimsher was a freemason. He began with the NC in 1900 and served as RSM for 22 years, becoming something of a local institution.²⁹

The overlap of membership allowed for groups which might otherwise have been isolated by reason of geographical location or work-affiliation, to be constantly integrated into the living body of the class. Without these mechanisms, the class might have become fragmented, splitting along lines of town and countryside, colonial service, business and agriculture, 'home-born' or Natal-born, judiciary and military, and so on. Here we are talking about lateral mobility. In addition, the overlap of membership facilitated vertical mobility. Many immigrants were not middle class (Beall, 1982, 107), yet the clubs channelled them into settler society. In some cases this meant expanding ONF ranks but in general it promoted racial cohesion. Membership of one club permitted entry into other realms which might otherwise have been closed. Club membership, for example, could be translated into business connection, sport participation, family creation (clubs being the place where sons, daughters, nephews and nieces were paired with appropriate partners). These themes are explored in more detail in the next section.

Section 3 The Influence of the Clubs

In the course of my research, virtually every person I interviewed confirmed the importance of the old boy network, the Victoria Club and the freemasons. None was able to identify exactly how these networks worked and it is the task of this section to establish the extent and means of their influence.

There are two major reasons why the influence of the old boy network is difficult to establish. The first, is because it operates informally via a set of codes which members recognise and to which they respond. The second is because the old boy network does not operate alone or in isolation.

27 Private communication, Michael Johnson, Ixopo.

28 Natal Carbineers Archive, Pietermaritzburg, file: 'Umvoti Mounted Rifles and associated regts'.

29 Burkimsher was very keen on tent-pegging, a mounted martial skill developed in India and loved organising gymkhana's. He was a keen shotist and captained the NC team, 1902-14. He won springbok colours in 1912. In this period he also trained the Hilton College cadets. On retirement in 1922 he became proprietor of the Horae Shoe Hotel. He continued to serve as president of Pietermaritzburg's Rifle Association. In addition he was President of the Maritzburg Boating club and an executive member of the National Bowling Committee. He judged horae jumping at the Royal Show Show. Burkimsher loved Hilton College and sent his sons there. When he died he was given a Masonic funeral service, whereafter the NC gave him a military funeral. Natal Carbineer Archive, Pietermaritzburg. File 'Burkimsher': Reminiscences of Burkimsher Jnr. b 1916.

It is well documented in Britain that public school boys dominated government, the imperial service, business. What is not so clear is how this came about. One theory notes that public school boys went to Oxbridge and it was as much the influence of these tertiary institutions which explain professional success, as the influence of the schools themselves (Bishop and Wilkinson, 1967). Other theories suggest that old boy networks nepotistically found positions for its members. In Natal, there is some evidence of the latter process. When Dennis Fannin (an Hiltonian) began his law career, for example, his father encouraged him and set up articles with a Pietermaritzburg lawyer who was also an Hiltonian. His law career then took off with the help of his brother who facilitated a partnership with Jim Hathorn (a class mate at Hilton) (Fannin interview, 1992).³⁰ The informal way in which the network operated joined a host of organisations to one another and facilitated transfusion. Membership of the Royal Agricultural Society, for example, was often an entree into the Victoria Club. Being a member of both would allow one to establish business contacts, gain market information and have access to state officials with knowledge of state regulations and opportunities (Foster interview, 1994).

The extent of the network provided by the Victoria Club was massive. A perusal of its 1907 and 1917 membership lists read like a who's who of Natal. Arnott, Sir J G Dartnell, Greene, Leuchars, Macfarlane (NC), McKenzie, Rethman (NMR), W S Shepstone, W E Tanner, J S Wylie were all in the top echelons of Natal's regimental hierarchy (see chapter 6). Education was represented by Barns, A S Langley and Loram (MC), C J Mudie (Headmaster, Estcourt School), Oberle (MC and DHS) Oxland (MC); members and former members of government included: William Beaumont, C Bird, Sir A H Hime, Sir Thomas Hyslop, Sir F R Moor, Sir T K Murray, W S Shepstone, C J Smythe, Sir George Sutton, Sir T Watt, H D Winter. The law was very well represented, the following being Supreme Court judges: Justice W Broome, T F Carter, J C C Chadwick, J C Dove-Wilson, C G Jackson, A W Mason, F S Tatham. Sitting members of Parliament or provincial council were: Dr R A Buntine, R M Chadwick, W F Clayton, J Dyson, J McAuslin, A J McGibbon, J W Moor, T Orr, J Schofield, W J Slatter, P H Taylor. If you add to this a host of ONFs (for example, Baynes, Hathorn, Kimber, Mackenzie, Shaw, Woollatt, Woods, Woollatt) the full extent of networking possibility becomes clear.³¹

Within freemasonry there are rare suggestions of how informal networking operated. When freemason officials travelled around the country, their hosts used their official office to smooth their passage and ease their pocket. In 1889 an eastern Cape visitor was very grateful for this generosity. He was given a free railway pass for a month by the general manager of the NGR (apparently a mason) at the behest of the district chairman, R I Finnemore.³² On another occasion, masons came together in a business venture, the one investing in his friend's company.³³

There were other channels too. The school magazines, directed primarily towards the old boys, often contained information necessary for successful networking. The detailed accounts of old boy doings promoted interaction, identifying the career paths and professional locations of old boys. It sometimes went further. School magazines could run stories on opportunities. In 1912 the Michaelhouse magazine urged old boys to take up farming in eastern Uganda. "If any past or present Michaelhouse boy intends trying his luck up here, I will gladly supply him with any

30 The Hathorns were a numerous and influential Pietermaritzburg clan. From 1876 until 1921 K H Hathorn (who became a Supreme Court judge) was mostly on the committee of the Victoria Club. In that same period, Fergus Hathorn chaired the committee for six consecutive years (1893-96), and from 1923 A A Roy Hathorn became a committee members as well.

31 List of Members of the Victoria Club, Pietermaritzburg, Natal (Pietermaritzburg, Vause, Slatter and Calvert, 1907); Victoria Club, Pietermaritzburg, List of Members, 1917 (n/p. n/d)

32 The South African Freemason, 2, 1889, 150.

33 The South African Freemason, 6, 1893, 342.

information he should desire to the best of my ability."³⁴ Hilton College's practice was to obtain its provisions from old boys. Contracts to supply food and provisions generally went to parents with sons at the school or to old Hiltonians themselves.³⁵

We do not know what impression this made on those outside the network. But an impression of what it might have been like comes from a novel of the American South in the early twentieth century.

It was a matter of course in those days, when decisions were to be made about the affairs of black people, for the legal system to take into account the judgement of reliable white men. A word dropped to a dinner party, over cards at the Elysian Club, or over a game of golf at the country club made everyone's interest and the interest of justice clear. Mr. Lord did his banking at Farmers' Trust and he and Percy Quinn were old friends. And Percy, of course, had gone to the state university law school, had known the judge in whose court the estate would be probated since they'd been boys together. (Douglas, 1991, 111-2)

There was great overlap in membership between the various clubs and the military, the sporting establishment, government and schools. Many informants testified to this: in the Karkloof, Hilton College, polo playing and membership of the UMR often went together (Solomon interview, 1992). In Creighton, the overlap was between 'old school tie' and the NMR (Smith interview, 1992). Coming from Hilton, Michaelhouse or MC assisted one in initially gaining entry into the regiments and then in obtaining a commission (Fannin interview, 1992). Similarly, such backgrounds assisted in gaining public office: in 1916 the mayors of Pietermaritzburg, Durban and Greytown, were all old boys of MC.³⁶

Membership of freemasonry and important and influential political and military positions was also significant. Harry Escombe, Natal prime minister (1897) was head of his Durban lodge on five occasions between 1866 and 1872 (Anon, 1958, 17). G T Hurst, later commander of NMR, was a member of the Rothesay Lodge (Durban) from 1912 (McIntyre, 1935, 21). In 1909, amongst Natal's freemasons, were J Ellis Brown (mayor of Durban), Pietermaritzburg's sanitary inspector and Newcastle's Chief of Police (Anon, 1909, 7-9). Members of ONFs were also freemasons: R H Raw (Nottingham Road farmers), John Black (Boston farmer). In addition the well-known MC teacher and rugby enthusiast, John Stalker (see chapter 4), Natal Police Inspector W D Campbell and John Watt, the manager of Bank of Africa (Durban). Four other prominent freemasons were members of the Victoria Club: R I Finnemore (was a Victoria Club committee member in 1881 (Hattersley, 1959, 52)); Skelmersdale Lodge head (1893), W J O'Brien;³⁷ J McKellar (General Manager, Natal Bank) and Thomas Watts, government minister and delegate to the National Convention (Anon, 1909, 11).³⁸

Nor was this just a Natal phenomenon, though I have argued that in Natal it was particularly marked. At the very apex of power in Southern Africa, Cecil Rhodes was a freemason and member of the Rand Club (Rich, 1989, 88). In the empire at large, Rich argues that trend was

34 S. Michael's Chronicle, III, 5, December 1912, 10.

35 Hilton College Archive, Head Master's Letter book, October-November 1905. Nicholson, Todd and Co supplied Hilton's potato requirements, while Randles Brothers and Hudson, supplied the flour.

36 Pietermaritzburg School Magazine, 111, 42, July 1916, 3.

37 Anon, 1893, 39.

38 The list here is definitely limited. Unlike the Victoria Club whose membership was publicly known, I have found no list of freemasons in Natal. Most freemason articles are secretive or uninformative, providing either no details of members at all, or only information as to the status of men in relation to freemasonry itself.

similar: "Imperial leaders climbed the masonic and government ladders at the same time." (Rich, 1989, 82) When they came together, they produced an extraordinary concentration of political authority. At the 1897 meeting of the Imperial Lodge in London, prime ministers from Natal, New South Wales, Victoria, Tasmania, New Zealand, plus the Dukes of Abercorn, Lord Saltoun and Earl of Lathorn were present (Rich, 1989, 88).

The overlap referred to above obviously facilitated the informal influence which this chapter has been concerned to demonstrate. But, in addition, there were moments when connections were more obvious and come to light in the official record. One such (rare) piece of evidence concerns a communication from Douglas de Fenzl to the Attorney General, Labistour, in 1906. Douglas de Fenzl thanked Labistour for his support in general, but particularly "in connection with the movement and sect in Pietermaritzburg and Masonic Benevolent Home for Aged and Indigent Freemason and the Widows of Freemasons in Natal". Labistour replied on the same day, "It will always be a pleasure to me to assist your Institution in any way I can."³⁹ On the face of it the issue is of little significance - a little government generosity (and not necessarily of the financial kind either) is all that is alluded to. The argument of this chapter is that Natal's ruling class operated ceaselessly to consolidate and perpetuate their positions through networks. Without these possibilities, the nature of their class power would have been different and more limited.

Section 4 The Clubs and Distinction

The clubs were established by men with a conscious sense of who ought, and ought not to be, members. This act of distinguishing, Bourdieu reminded us, produces distinction. We know nothing definite about the motivations of Lushington Phillips, Mellors and the respective school old boys, but it is possible to deduce from early membership what the target was. In the Victoria Club, for example, foundation members included a liberal representation of public school and Oxbridge men - the gentleman ideal. Many of the early members were so described: John Macfarlane was viewed by the diarist Dobie as "quite the highland gentleman and chief of the clan" while his brother, Walter, was "a scholarly man with much natural dignity". Members were frequently prominent in sporting or military circles (Hattersley, 1959, 16). But the colony as a whole contained a small pool of potential members whose social environment did not easily lend itself to the constraints of club life. As Hattersley puts it, in the 1880s and 1890s settlers were imbued with a "stubborn persistence and a spirit of self-resource that produced a type of frontiersman unaccustomed to governmental (or social RM) control" (Hattersley, 1950, 27-8).

One way of ensuring that members were distinguished was to charge membership fees. In the freemasonry, the initiation fee in 1903 was £10 10s (ten guineas) and annual subscription £1 1s (one guinea). This rose in 1904 to £15 15s and £1 10s respectively (McIntyre, 1935, 27). The Victoria Club charged a 5 guinea entrance fee plus 5 guineas subscription (Hattersley, 1959, 28).

The societies all had clear ideas on who could not join. No blacks nor women were members. Race is not mentioned at all in records of the Victoria and old boys' clubs; it was simply assumed that they were not desirable. The international nature of freemasonry made their position more explicit. In a careful editorial, its official newspaper subtly bypassed the issue. It criticised the bigoted practice of United States freemasonry: "no coloured man can be admitted

39 AGO 1/8/31, 219A/1906, Douglas de Fenzl to Attorney General 20 November 1906; Attorney General to Douglas de Fenzl, 20 November 1906.

into any regularly organised lodge". It then claimed that British freemasons would no more blackball "a man because his skin was black than because his eyes were blue". It continued, "We in South Africa have not yet been brought face to face with the question. Our coloured people are barely emerging from barbarism, but were they as advanced as the American negro .. the British spirit of fairplay would carry us as far at least as permitting coloured men to have lodges of their own".⁴⁰ The attitudes of freemasonry in the colony are probably better assessed from comments about the Colony's Indians. Considering them as a threat to English domination of trade, they were described as dirty and "vigorously in opposition to modern hygienic ideas".⁴¹

The Victoria Club preserved its male exclusivity until the 1990s. Hattersley smugly described the situation as it pertained in the 1950s.

A traditional attraction of club life has been the sense of satisfaction with which a member could feel assured of immunity from female company. In this respect, the Victoria Club was notably conservative. (Hattersley, 1959, 41)

Early efforts to make inroads into the ban failed. In 1907 the suggestion of a monthly ladies evening was defeated. In 1911 as winds of change borne of social flux and dislocation began to reach Natal, a compromise allowed a ladies night once a month. In 1925 this was increased to two a month. But women still had to enter the club by the back door! The freemasons had a similar position which was that "the best Lodge for women is the domestic Lodge by the family fireside."⁴²

Membership was prized, and social capital could be made out of it. Even in the most secret of the clubs, the freemasonry, membership was sufficiently important to allow for the names of office-bearers to be publicized in prominent colonial publications.⁴³ Within the parameters of membership understood by the founders and subsequently enlisted members, there had to be ways of deciding on membership. Procedures were clearly laid down by all societies. Within the Victoria Club members had to be proposed and seconded whereafter a ballot would be held. The black ball system operated, ensuring anonymity and the ability of members to keep somebody unwanted out of the privileges of membership (Hattersley, 1959, 37). In addition, reciprocal membership was granted to like-minded clubs, and honorary membership to men (for example, the governor and officers in the British army or navy) who would enhance the standing of the club (Hattersley, 1959, 18-19).

Such was the importance of membership that fierce debates were waged even within the selected stratum of men eligible for membership. Amongst old boys at Maritzburg College, the debate was most fierce when it concerned posthumous membership. In 1900, after the conventional part of the South African war was concluded, old boys met to decide how to "honour fallen heroes". The meeting hinged on whether old boys who had fought on the Boer side would be included in the proposed memorial. On the one hand, the Governor and Henry Bale (Attorney General and later President of the MC Old Boys' Association) put the view that "these misguided men had been offending against the Colony". Opponents of this view appealed to old boys "to be Englishmen in the truest sense of the word, and not sully o(u)r national reputation by an act narrow-minded, mean and petty, in short 'un-English'".⁴⁴

40 The South African Freemason, 3, 1890, 289-290.

41 The South African Freemason, 2, 1889, 130.

42 The South African Freemason, 4, 1890-1, 154.

43 For example, in the The Natal Almanac, Directory and Yearly Register for 1881 (published 1880).

44 The Pietermaritzburg College Magazine, 1, 5, December 1900, 15, 19.

The issue of loyalty was of supreme importance and war evoked it. In the First World war, both the Victoria Club and Natal freemasonry brought up the issue. In 1916 the club requested the three members of Austrian or German extraction not to use the premises and they complied. The ban was lifted later that year. In other clubs in the country, the situation was not so amicably resolved. The Durban Club and the Rand Club expelled 'hostile' members in 1916 (Neame, 1957, 100). In 1917 freemasons of "alien enemy birth" were requested not to attend any lodge meetings. A more extreme position, which did not prevail, was introduced to exclude all South Africans of military age unless they could satisfactorily explain why they had not enlisted (McIntyre, 1935, 29-30).

There were other reasons for exclusion. In the early days of the Victoria Club, the chief justice, Walter Harding, did not become a member. "He was said to lack refinement". Similarly, F Napier Broome, colonial secretary in the 1870s was blackballed because of his history of mistreating servants and a "somewhat choleric temperament" (Hattersley, 1959, 16, 36). In admitting members, freemasonry was also driven by two types of concerns, the social and moral stature of the candidate and whether he was congenial. Strict admission criteria and procedures were stipulated and it was frequently a source of regret amongst senior freemasons that undesirable or unsuitable members were admitted (Russell, 1884, iv; Anon, 1909, 4; Anon, 1916, 46). In one instance these dual concerns came together when a 'gay lothario' was admitted. He eloped with the daughter of a prominent businessman and in the process alerted members to his promiscuous past. The editorial of The South African Freemason described him as a "very unpleasant member".⁴⁵ The exclusion of men who were suspected of being disruptive and difficult and of being likely to threaten the easy and friendly interactions of the club alerts us to the importance of friendship within the clubs and will be further examined in the next section.

Within the clubs hierarchy was important. The men elected to lead were representative of their ideals and standing. If the clubs *per se* conferred distinction, its office-bearers consolidated and bore testimony to that distinction.

The Victoria Club's early committees featured colonial notables, frequently senior government officials who were often landowners too. It was important that such people had 'names' - so for example when a relatively unknown person like Charles Glyn came onto the committee, it was made known that he came from a "well-known London family of bankers" (Hattersley, 1959, 29). The importance of having a family name of distinction privileged metropolitan lineage over colonial, so that it was not until 1900 that the Victoria Club got its first colonial born chairman, Colonel E M Greene, commander of NC (Hattersley, 1959, 38). Amongst the freemasons it was the same, the first colonial-born district grand master, Hugh Thompson, took office in 1921 (Alexander, 1947?, 48).

Two principles underwrote the procedures of committee selection. One was seniority - the duration of service for and membership in the club were necessary conditions of selection. The second was merit. Clubs were keen to avoid all suggestion of nepotism or irregularity. Two examples of many taken from freemason records demonstrate this. Explaining in 1889 how he selected office bearers, the head of a lodge said, "I have endeavoured to act solely with a view to the best interests of the fraternity and to sink all personal preferences".⁴⁶ At a meeting of the Prince Alfred Lodge, Pietermaritzburg, in 1892 Worshipful Master Ferneyhough stressed: "Your selection for this high position in the Lodge has been the result of merit. Your

45 The South African Freemason, 5, 1892, 102.

46 The South African Freemason, 2, 1889, 110.

attainments masonically reflect credit upon your perseverance and prove how you have appreciated and valued the institution of Freemasonry".⁴⁷

It was not enough simply to be a member of a club. One had, in the course of life openly to demonstrate one's membership if the distinction attached to membership were fully to accrue. There were a number of ways in which the full weight of membership could be conveyed to non-members. Ritual was the most important. Ritual is an act of repetitive performance. Since the social importance of membership is always threatened, never stable, it is via repetition that the distinction of membership is perpetuated (Bourdieu, 1991, 58). There is another aspect of ritual, that which is associated with initiation. Ritualistic entry into membership of a club, according to Bourdieu, separates "those who have undergone it, not from those who have not yet undergone it, but from those who will not undergo it in any sense, and thereby instituting lasting difference between those to whom the rite pertains and those to whom it does not pertain" (Bourdieu, 1991, 117). Rituals thus realise symbolic capital. People who are routinely part of the pageantry or who participate in it for the first time, thus come to see themselves differently and act accordingly, and are also seen differently, seen as bearing distinction. Rituals (and what Bourdieu calls 'acts of institution') preserve elites because they discourage all attempts to "cross the line, to transgress, desert or quit" (Bourdieu, 1991, 122).

The freemasons developed the most intricate of rituals and placed greatest stress on their importance.

No object can be more laudable than the ambition on the part of young Masons to become perfect in Ritual; it is the stepping-stone to Masonic excellence, for without it they are nothing, but if we confine ourselves to that and that only, ours will be but lip Masonry at the best. ... We owe it to ourselves to endeavour to enforce by example as well as by precept, those glorious principles which are nowhere more clearly inculcated than in our beautiful lectures, and nowhere more forcibly impressed than in the working of our ceremonies. (Anon, 1909, 3-4)

Throughout this period, freemasons opened their lodges with shows of great ostentation. Frequently, governors, resident commissioners, mayors and senior military men were in the procession (Anon, 1958, 16). No deviationism was permitted. The inclusion of "sundry bits of levity" into the "sober English and Scottish ritual", admonished a freemason reporter, tended "rather to provoke a smile than to burn the great lessons of the craft into the minds of candidates or bystanders".⁴⁸

The impression of freemason ceremony was hugely enhanced by the very expensive regalia worn by members. Uniform had meaning for those within freemasonry, indicating hierarchy. As Rich points out, making the link with public school custom clear, "The Imperial reliance on an identifying uniform recalled school life, where the number of unbuttoned buttons was fraught with meaning" (Rich, 19992, 57). For non-members, the effect of uniform confirmed exclusion, while dazzling at the same time. Rich describes the uniforms as talismans and totems, the "props of a unique stagecraft" (Rich 1992, 66). The ritual produced both awe and insecurity.

Public ritual was not as pronounced in the Victoria Club and old boys' societies yet it was present at every moment in the etiquette. The toasts, the singing of the anthem, the ways in

47 The South African Freemason, 5, 1892, 162.

48 The South African Freemason, 4, 1890-1, 191.

which senior members were addressed, the place where pipes could be smoked and cards played all these were ritualised, producing a feeling of unity as well as inspiring fear at the consequences of contravention.

A second way of demonstrating membership and establishing distinction was by fulfilling the duties which membership bestowed. Freemasons and old boys' societies stressed the importance of assisting members in distress.⁴⁹ In all clubs, members were obliged, to attend meetings punctually. The freemason hierarchy lectured members thus: "Among the first and plainest duties of a fraternity member is that of attendance at his lodge with regularity and punctuality. Punctuality and regularity are prime elements of success in business, whether individual or corporate; and when these elements are absent we are certain to find loss and confusion as a result".⁵⁰

Beyond the clearly stated duties and obligations of members was an unwritten code of honour in terms of which members were expected to conduct themselves. Only if one adhered to this, could one really be true to the broader mission of the club. In an 1892 freemason speech, this was made absolutely clear. A junior warden was instructed "to be in yourself a veritable plumbline of sobriety, morality and justness in the midst of your brethren and to be a pattern before them of Truth, Honour and Virtue, unless you are such, it is impossible for you to fulfill your duties as you ought".⁵¹ The societies thus contributed, formalised and disseminated the gentleman's code as an integral part of settler masculinity. The schools certainly laid the foundations for this requirement, along with toughness and athleticism, but it was the societies which stressed it and took it into adult life.

The code of honour had, inscribed within it, a particular reading of masculinity. Members were expected to be gentlemen; considerate, gracious, generous, wise and with powers of discernment. This was not just an expectation external to members. As Robert Nye points out, "honor was embodied in bourgeois men as a set of normative sexual characteristics and desires .. A man who deviated from these standards .. dishonored himself and brought shame to his family" (Nye, 1993, 9). Consequently the clubs all stressed gentlemanly behaviour. Freemasons were expected to be gentlemen. "The uppermost grade among Masons is that of **gentleman**. .. There are certain unerring tests by which to decide whether or not one has been exalted to this uppermost range. Is he forbearing and gentle? Is he careful of the feelings of others? Is he above meanness and vindictiveness? Is he courteous, magnanimous, and considerate? If he shows these and other like qualities he may be regarded as a true gentleman".⁵² Similarly past and present scholars of MC were expected to have good manners. This meant having "greater respect for others - for women, for old people, for those who are worthy of honour, for those who have been given authority which it is in the interests of the community to maintain. the well-mannered boy shows neither the assertiveness of familiarity nor the awkwardness of timidity. He is quietly natural, with a gentle nature - in other words, he is a gentleman".⁵³ The language which was used to describe gentlemen pointed to something else, something that was the opposite of 'gentle'. It was through the behaviour and the naming of that behaviour that the power of being a gentleman vis à vis others was established. By invoking something less - "'trivial' phrases, 'vulgar' expressions, 'facile' style" - society members could claim the status of "well chosen, 'elevated', 'lofty', 'dignified' or 'distinguished'" gentlemen (Bourdieu, 1991, 60).

49 Hilton College Archive, Hiltonian Society minute book, annual meeting, 28 June 1898.

50 *The South African Freemason*, 5, 1892, 331.

51 *The South African Freemason*, 5, 1892, 163.

52 *The South African Freemason*, 6, 1893, 227.

53 *Pietermaritzburg College Magazine*, 111, 30, June 1910 (sic), 15.

Generosity to one's subordinates was considered important, not just as an obedience to biblical injunction to give alms, but as an expression of largesse. Many of the ONFs kept open house between certain hours on a Sunday when friends would be welcome (Tatham interview, 1994). Where such gestures were reciprocated they served the purpose of uniting members of the group. Hospitality was, in short, "a vehicle for class organisation and capital accumulation" (Gilding, 1991: 33). Where the act of giving was directed at the poor, it bore the name of charity, altruism. Here it served to confirm the status of the giver. Bourdieu offers a critique. "Strictly 'disinterested', 'clean' activity, free of all 'compromises' with politics, is .. the most perfect form of social recognition, that is more or less secretly pursued by all associations, petit-bourgeois movements par excellence, which .. secure the profits of dignity and respectability for undertakings 'of general interest' while promising to satisfy particular interests" (Bourdieu, 1984, 451).

The expectations of members to be gentlemen was sustainable most easily in relation to a black population whose appreciation of such distinction was partial and whose critique of which was external to it. It was an altogether more difficult task to maintain distinction in the face of metropolitan critique. An example of this is provided by the account of a visitor to the Victoria Club who in 1885 complained of Pietermaritzburg's dirt roads and the unavoidable consequence of arriving to dinner "with **common** (my emphasis) apologies for clothes covered, and mouths filled, with dust." He also noted, with distaste, that the colonial gentry lacked refinement. "Many members of the club did not seem to feel comfortable at dinner unless the windows were open enough to blow the menu off the table", he reported (Hattersley, 1959, 28). Such criticisms were galling, and only spurred members all the better to master the art of being true gentlemen.⁵⁴

In the eighteenth century, societies were "moral institutions of the educated middle-class elite, which not only preached morality but also taught their members a standard of civilized behaviour that was in keeping with their moral claims of transcending the culture of the court and feudalism. This implied not only practicing reasoned speech but also a form of social intercourse free from hubbub, suggestiveness and coarseness as well as frivolity, play and eroticism. .. An atmosphere of solemnity prevailed, and this was the reason for the prohibition of alcohol and parlour games" (van Dülmen, 1992, 141). In our period, changes occurred. In the Victoria Club games of chance were prohibited and bets limited. Conversation was considered to be an art and overseas magazines were provided to raise the standard thereof. Indiscreet language and boastfulness were frowned upon. Yet, as we shall see in the next section, the solemnity of eighteenth and nineteenth centuries gave way to greater stress on pleasurable leisure time use: games, alcohol and sports all gained prominence and provided opportunities for levity.

Section 5 The Clubs as Locations of Friendship

What did the clubs do for their members? Thus far I have ignored the leisure function of clubs. Did members only join to become part of networks, to gain advantage of one kind or another? The following passage, referring to Ixopo freemasons, suggests otherwise.

"Such was the enthusiasm of Brethren that they even had a Lodge meeting during the siege of Ladysmith with the members making up regalia from bedsheets dipped (sic) with ink."⁵⁵

⁵⁴ The ambiguous relationship with the metropole is explored in chapter 6.

The clubs were meeting places for men. They provided venues for socializing, drinking, and other leisure time activity which the family home was seldom able to provide. In these activities, clubs fostered male friendship. We saw in the context of the schools that particular kinds of friendships emerged there. Large groups of boys would coalesce and find comfort in familiarity, occasionally breaking up into smaller groups to develop greater intimacy but never publicly exploring male friendship beyond strictly defined, homophobic borders. In this chapter I will pick up this theme and show how that basic mould was preserved and yet demonstrate that it was sufficiently malleable to take in behaviour that was not condoned in childhood, while remaining faithful to a socially sanctioned definition of male friendship.

The form that friendship between men has taken has changed over time (Connell, 1994). There is some debate about the psychological determinants and imperatives of friendship (Kaufman, 1987; Sherrod, 1987) and some authors still hold that men's understanding of relationships is different from that of women (Gilligan, 1982; Tanner, 1990). In keeping with the view that gender is not an essential category, this chapter will examine friendships as historically constructed without assuming that they have no interest in or capacity for intimacy. It is difficult historically to reconstruct the nature of friendships, even if one does have a good collection of correspondence to consult. In this chapter, without the aid of such correspondence, I shall on the basis of limited evidence attempt to speculate about male friendships on the basis of the locations provided by clubs for such interactions. It will be argued that the clubs provided a location for men to spend leisure time together. This time use was highly structured but there was nevertheless scope for the establishment of same-sex friendships which provided a complement to the forms of friendship and company which operated in the privacy of the home.

Within a class and in a colony dominated by family, it is legitimate to ask whether families did not provide men with sufficient emotional support. Was not the presence and support of wives and siblings, children and parents, enough for men's emotional needs? Comparative historical evidence suggests the contrary. The study of Toronto by Barry Wellman (1992) suggests that kin provided practical assistance rather than emotional support. Men thus spent a great deal of time in semi-public space where they forged friendships. In this period (nineteenth and early twentieth centuries) friendship was "a semi-public bond that got things done" (Wellman, 1992, 103). Friendship provided intimacy (Walker, 1994) as well as being utilitarian.

While it is important to understand the relationships between men purely in terms of their importance for men, it is equally important not to lose sight of the gender implications. The work of Remy locates exclusive male friendship within a set of gender power relations he calls *fratriarchy* (rule of the brotherhood) (Remy, 1990, 43). This "is based simply on the self-interest of the association of men itself. It reflects the demand of a group of lads to have the 'freedom' to do as they please, to have a good time" (Remy, 1990, 45). Remy considers *fratriarchy* to refer primarily to men who have not yet taken on family responsibilities. He describes the *fratriarchal* age-set as having an intimidatory relatedness to women and of having "a markedly delinquent character, including a penchant for gratuitous violence" (Remy, 1990, 45). In this chapter Remy's insights will be used but the definition of *fratriarchal* men will be extended to include men with family obligations, men with jobs, men in responsible situations. It will be shown that *fratriarchal* power stems from friendships which are not consciously constructed as exclusionary, or as misogynistic. It will also show that *fratriarchal* power does not have to be delinquent to be effective.

Remy argues that the critical institution of *fratriarchy* is the men's hut - "the place where those

males who have earned the right to call themselves **men**, or are in process of attaining this emblem of privilege, gather. .. (It is) the building or space in which the men meet, talk, work, and play. It is the pivot of their domination" (Remy, 1990, 46). Frequently the dealings of the hut are secret. Wellman describes the men's hut in gentler terms as the 'third place': not the domestic or semi-public sphere (Wellman, 1990, 77). The third place, according to Wellman, emerged historically because of the sexual division of labour (women were in the home, men were in public). Men thus moved from the workplace to the 'third place', a place closer geographically and sociologically to work than to family.

The leisure time choices of whom to associate with and where, were not, of course, without deep gendered implication. Hearn argues, for example, that the choice of seeking male friendship within an all-male institution (rather than the family) was itself a choice of gendered significance. For him, "The divisions or differences between the private domains and the public domains are fundamental in a patriarchal society. To put this in a slightly different way - the creation of the public domains is a creation of men in order to wrest power from women in the private domain" (Hearn, 1992, 21). Not all agree with this somewhat conspiratorial assessment. Some argue that women were powerful within the domestic realm (McLintock, 1995) and a corollary was that men might seek comfort and support outside of it. Another suggestion is that in the mid to late nineteenth century, male friendships were in decline. In the Victorian period friendship "lost much of the quality of mutual involvement that comrades held for one another. Feelings of male comradeship were largely relegated to marginal activities, like sport or other leisure pursuits, or participation in war." (Giddens, 1992, 44).⁵⁶ A related point emerges from the Foucauldian tradition where the stigmatization of homosexuality (a word coined in 1869) placed ever stricter limitations on the form which male friendships might take. "Intense male friendship was perceived as inimical to the smooth functioning of modern institutions like the army, the bureaucracy, educational and administrative bodies. Homophobia was the chief weapon against too great an intimacy in male friendships" (Segal, 1990, 139). Yet another interpretation of friendship is offered by Robert Nye. In mid nineteenth century France, men constantly faced the trauma of being shamed with dishonour. "The irony of male authority in such societies is that the considerable power males possess by virtue of their masculinity is exceedingly fragile, is open to constant challenge, and produces keen feelings of vulnerability in men" (Nye, 1992, 10). Such vulnerability would have been a powerful emotional propellant to seek the relative safety of friendship in a socially enclosed, male group. There is some truth in each of these views: in the clubs discussed in this chapter, a particular type of friendship thrived. It took a platonic form which met important emotional needs in men: - emotional security (friends to listen, to give support and advice, to be with), familiar and safe surroundings in which to give expression to aspects of masculinity which were not condoned or possible at home. Here I would include excessive drinking, horse-play, ribald humour and swearing and story telling, even though the range of such expressions was limited depending on the club and its prescriptions.

The clubs, where they had a spatial existence (the old boy clubs did not), were places where men could come together as friends. While hierarchies and difference marked the world of work, behind the doors of the Victoria Club and the freemason lodges, all were united by institutional belonging. Men generally went to the clubs not consciously to foster some class project or to seal some political or business deal, but to be in the company of other, like-thinking men.

The clubs facilitated contact, not just of people with one another, but with the world of the ONFs. News and information which constantly located the ONFs in relation to one another and

⁵⁶ It is difficult to comprehend what Giddens means when he describes sport and military activities as 'marginal activities'. The contention of this thesis is that these were central to male expression, bonding, and ultimately, to the male power expressed in settler masculinity.

the outside world was avidly communicated. The importance of this can easily be seen by the insistence by people in the countryside on having the post cart service running efficiently and reliably.⁵⁷ One can see it in correspondence of the period too. An extreme example is Alfred Henderson apologizing for delaying, by a day, writing to his father. He had narrowly escaped death at Isandhlwana! (Hathorn, n/d, 228)

In the nineteenth century, men were in geographically or bureaucratically isolated jobs. In the course of a working day they might see fellow workers, but would not have the time and space to develop casual (non-professional) relationships. It was here that clubs came into their own. At lunch time or after hours, the Victoria Club, centrally located, provided the venue for the informal interactions of like-thinking men. Professionals from around Pietermaritzburg town would meet members of parliament, officers of the military establishment and a variety of senior public figures. Here matters could be discussed without the intrusion of conventions which governed the workplace. Without such a central meeting place, friendship networks could not easily have grown up.

The clubs were also attractive for other reasons. Rich (1989) argues that the rituals of freemason lodges reminded members of schoolboy life and were thus comfortable and familiar. A contemporary observation from a public school boy captures the allure: He "loved the life of the House, the silliness and all the gossip about sex and about masters. I liked my friends to be good-looking, gossipy and to share my kind of jokes. If you are in an institution like that you form friendships which are not based on anything else which is held in common other than the fact that you all happen to be there" (Devlin and Williams, 1992, 153-4). Van Dülmen argues, similarly, that the lodge allowed members to "enjoy a cultist experience of fraternal association" (van Dülmen, 1992, 60-1).

For the clubs to function as places of emotional security, members instituted a range of protective measures. Women were excluded. Hattersley explains this phenomenon in apologetic terms: "In nearly all social clubs there still prevails the feeling, however chivalrously it may be cloaked, that men must keep their womenfolk out, if the comfortable atmosphere of the club is to be preserved" (Hattersley, 1959, 42). Remy offers a different explanation: "The men's hut traditionally rigidly excludes women. This reflects its function .. as the actualization of the desire for separation from women and children and their world" (Remy, 1990, 49). For the purposes of this section, I want to stress the significance of this exclusion in terms of the way in which men constructed their emotional lives. Men sought both fraternal support as well as intimacy. Within the nuclear family, men may have found sexual intimacy.⁵⁸ This did not necessarily go hand in hand with a sharing of work problems, sexual anxieties or a range of other interests which the sexual division of labour in the home and at the work place placed beyond the wife's experience. Within the extended family, material support was often available, but not necessarily friendship (Wellman, 1992, 91). Men tended to air these concerns in the clubs where, too, they could disport their knowledge of politics and world affairs, also considered to be beyond the ken of women.⁵⁹

The importance of congenial relations within the club caused the "traditional values" to prohibit the discussion of party politics or anything else which would threaten such relations. Tolerance of different opinion was insisted upon (Neame, 1957, 85). The Victoria Club never

57 For example, MJPW 87, LW 4606/1901.

58 We know little about the secret sexual lives of the ONFs, though in Britain, there research sheds doubt on the extent to which married people shared sexual intimacy (Hall, 1991).

59 It is important to stress that socializing, drinking and so on, were not gender-neutral activities. A study of drinking in contemporary South African society shows, for example, that social drinking is framed in terms of norms which marginalise other (non-drinking) masculinities, while supporting hegemonic masculinity (Kaminer and Dixon, 1995).

became the "stronghold of a political party or of particular professions, but it was decidedly the most appropriate place where visitors could be entertained, or colonial opinion measured on any subject of public interests" (Hattersley, 1959, 31). The club became a place of stability, predictability. A place which offered a quiet haven as well as a dependable source of companionship. In the lodges this was also the case: Friendship was held to be the "cement that brings men closer to one another and teaches us to realize what the true brotherhood of mankind should be".⁶⁰

The major activities of the clubs reflect their social (as opposed to political) function. Cards, snooker and billiards were all begun in the early years of the Victoria Club. Later, the club organised cricket matches against Durban and Richmond sides while golf and squash became popular in the inter-war years (Hattersley, 1959, 39). The old boys' societies were primarily involved in organising sports matches. At the annual speech day, old boy sides would frequently be arrayed against current school first XIs and XVs.

Drinking was another important activity. Publicly, the club and lodges presented themselves as models of sobriety. This is difficult to disprove, though highly unlikely. The bar at the Victoria Club was the centre of its activities. And an informant confirmed that Ixopo freemasons returned from lodge meetings in a drunken state.⁶¹ The Victoria Club was formed at a time when drinking habits in Britain were changing. The separation of middle from working class extended spatially to locations of leisure time usage, and "no respectable middle-class man would enter a public house". Instead "Gentlemen took to their clubs, and the non-temperance part of the middle-class took to drinking at home in their increasingly large and comfortable houses" (Thompson, 1988, 308).

Descriptions of the Victoria Club in this period stress ease and relaxation. Men sat until the early hours, reading, playing cards, talking and drinking. The club became involved, from the late nineteenth century in amateur drama and from the turn of the century on, renowned for its balls. "When, in October 1904, the Moody Manners Company brought to Scott's theatre a season of grand opera, special late suppers were provided on two nights of the gay week, to which members could invite their friends" (Hattersley, 1959, 34). Strict convention and formality which could produce stuffiness, gave way to "a warmth and friendliness" (Hattersley, 1959, 45).

The atmosphere in freemason meetings was not dissimilar. Accounts of lodge meetings stress singing, toasts, and companionship. While the public view was of ritual solemnity, reports are spliced with anecdotes and jokes.⁶² And though sobriety was stressed, in some country lodges at least, drinking was a serious activity. There was a conscious effort to produce friendship and a sense of unity. In 1893 the incoming worshipful master of a Pietermaritzburg lodge hoped "that good feeling might long continue and that the goodfellowship and unity which had hitherto been a special feature of the Lodge might never cease to be the distinguishing characteristic of the Prince Alfred Lodge. (Applause)".⁶³ When a fellow mason suffered emotional catastrophe, he was supported. In 1893, Ferneyhough, the head of the St Alfred Lodge lost, within a week, his wife and son to disease. Sympathy was expressed for his "domestic affliction and suffering" and his steadfastness and friendship within the lodge was toasted. Expressing his gratitude Ferneyhough said "there was a feeling of regret when parting with anything we love and he could say the Prince Alfred Lodge was indelibly imprinted upon

60 *The South African Freemason*, 2, 1889, 191.

61 Personal communication, June Farrer, February 1995.

62 *The South African Freemason*, 5, 1892, 298.

63 *The South African Freemason*, 6, 1893, 178.

his heart." He continued that the lodge had allowed him to come to terms with his grief "He had taken pleasure in the work of the Lodge and it had helped him to divert his thoughts".⁶⁴ It is commonly supposed that the clubs had clear political agendas which mirrored the class-nature of their membership. The concentration of elites and the opportunities for politicking must obviously have cemented class rule. This view is not, at first sight, correct. In all the clubs, the discussion of 'politics' was taboo. The weakness of the party political system in Natal and the fact that so many of the Victoria Club's members were actually in government, meant that difficulties around this issue did not surface. Elsewhere, in the Rand Club for example, matters were more complicated. Most of the conspirators for the 1896 Jameson Raid were club members and many were sought and arrested there. The club itself, however, managed successfully to protest its innocence (Neame, 1957, 50, 53). In the same plot, two prominent Rand freemasons were centrally involved, leading to debates within freemasonry about their continued suitability (Cooper, 1986, 66). The societies were however clearly suited for the informal discussion of business and politics. As Donald Sinclair put it, in the Victoria Club "farmers met their bank managers in a cordial atmosphere which cemented trust" (Sinclair interview, 1993).

Friendship could not, of course, be guaranteed. In the early days, when the colonial honour code was still powerful, matters frequently became heated. The founder of the club, Lushington Phillips, was sued for libel by Philip Allen (colonial treasurer) after Phillips had accused him of dishonesty. When the court found against Allen, he resigned his government post, took a demotion as resident magistrate in far-off Newcastle where he committed suicide three years later (Hattersley, 1959, 24). The metropolitan codes of honour imported into the colony began to lose influence as the colonial gentry established their own codes. These included belonging to particular families, going to the elite secondary schools, participating in sports (especially rugby, cricket and polo) and serving in particular regiments.

Conclusion

The clubs served socially to unite farmers, professionals, businessmen and officials of the state. In this process, the midland ONFs met, married and socialised with the coastal sugarocracy, in so doing, expanding the class and its influence, and spanning social and geographical gap between Pietermaritzburg and Durban. In providing limited entry points to immigrants, the clubs gave some whites affiliation to the ONF class. In this sense, the clubs were important in class expansion and reproduction.

The clubs were also active in spreading class power. This is evidenced in the nature and extent of their membership, in the phenomenon of overlapping or shared membership and the operation of old boy networks. The further influence of clubs was visible and publicly manifested by ritual, by the status and behaviour of members. The moral codes which the clubs upheld provided men "both with the basis for claims of individual distinction and a collective warrant for certifying superiority and exclusiveness of their class" (Nye, 1993, 8). On the one hand, these codes created hierarchies internal to the ONF class. On the other hand, the codes of distinction were often only known, understood and mastered by club members which meant that they served as mechanisms of exclusion. In addition, however, the ostentation and solemnity of public club behaviour and display was integral to the mythical representation of the class character of the ONFs.

The forty years under review constituted the heyday of clubs and societies. There was little

64 *The South African Freemason*, 6, 1893, 179.

effective resistance by women to men spending many hours at the club. There was no peer censure either. For the gentry, the clubs confirmed standing in relation to peers and solidified status in relation to the ineligible. The clubs were not open, and access only became easier (and membership expanded) once Natal's white male ruling class was more integrated. This occurred through the creation of a common educational base, the growth of an independent accumulation base, the development of political autonomy and bureaucratic capacity and the ambivalent distancing process from the metropole.

During the nineteenth century, Bourdieu argues, the growth of institutions reduced the power of symbolic capital. Economic and cultural capital circulated more freely and became more important relative to symbolic capital. Institutions became the locus of inequality rather than individuals. Inequality becomes less personalised (Bourdieu, 1991, 24). Certainly, the power of the clubs as institutions up to 1910 is clear. But after Union, the trend is less clearcut. Between 1892 and 1931, father and son, Sir Albert Hime and Arthur Hime, were frequently chairmen of the Victoria Club committee. In these years, Sir Albert had been Natal Prime Minister and Minister with a variety of portfolios. Arthur, one of his sons, had become an advocate and key figure in Natal sporting circles. They had together and individually spread the influence of their family, Hilton College (to which most of the sons went) and rugby throughout the colony. They had successfully claimed senior and relatively lucrative government positions for themselves and their sons/brothers. With Union, their influence dwindled suddenly and catastrophically. Humphrey, provincial Under Secretary for Agriculture, Harry, Receiver of Revenue in Pietermaritzburg and Maurice, Principal Clerk, in the Department of Agriculture's Veterinary Division all lost their government jobs as part of the bureaucratic rationalisation which followed unification.⁶⁵

The reduction of access to the central state did not of course end the influence of the old boy network, though it did confine it regionally. Evidence of this to be found in a letter sent by Anthony (Tooky) Johnson, to "Dear Old Boy" in July 1992. It begins, "As a past pupil of one of the leading schools in Natal (Hilton, Michaelhouse, Kearnsey College, DHS, Westville, Northlands, Beachwood and Glenwood), you are eligible for membership in the most exciting business network yet produced." Membership was also aimed at "members of clubs and societies associated with these schools". The intention was to "enable members to do business with people they know rather than with strangers. People you were at school with or played sport against are all potential clients or suppliers".⁶⁶

As places of prestige and exclusion, it is hardly surprising that the clubs were the objects of hatred. In Johannesburg, the Rand Club was attacked in 1913 and threatened again in 1922 by striking white workers, who held it to be the informal seat of power of the Reef's capitalists (Neame, 1957, 89-95, 108). The views of those excluded from membership in Natal has not come to my attention, but for the **khosiwa** in particular, seeking a place in colonial society as landed gentry, their exclusion must have been a painful reminder of the futility of their cause. This must particularly have been the case as they strove independently, to acquire the marks of distinction established as the norm in these clubs and by these networks.⁶⁷

Belonging to an ONF or being a white, were no guarantee of individual distinction, nor was it enough to assure social acceptance and inclusion in class institutions. Crossing the line could

65 CAD, URU, 88, 1259, 18 April 1912; URU 83, 806, 7 February 1912; URU, 78, 335, 1 Feb 1912.

66 In possession of the author.

67 The **amakhoiwa** set up societies and schools, attended church, followed the dress codes of the colony (Hughes, 1988; Marks, 1975; Meinjea, 1988). Called 'Black Victorians', they nevertheless failed to be acknowledged or included in settler society.

mean ostracisation. The creation of taste, went together with the establishment of dis-taste. In the collective interests of the class, an individual could find himself cast out. He might be denied membership of the clubs and respect. He might be **persona non grata** at tea and dinner parties. He might no longer be favoured with business opportunities, jobs or political office. These misfits will be discussed in chapter 9.

The ostracisation was not simply a display of class revulsion or an expression of moral outrage. It was an effect, too, of the choices routinely made by members of the clubs about whom they would like to befriend. Club members created for themselves places where friendships could happen, and leisure time be enjoyed. Men who did not share their convictions about friendship, about enjoyment, about relaxation, were not admitted. Not being admitted, meant being excluded.

Chapter 6 Volunteer Regiments, Military Men and Militarism

Natal's colonial history was characterised by concern about defence. The proximity of Zululand with its large black population served as a constant reminder of the 'black threat'. Even after the Zulu kingdom had been defeated in the 1879 war and thrown into disarray by the civil wars of the early 1880s, white settlers remained vigilant. Evidence of their suspicion and vigilance was to be found in the establishment and maintenance of a civilian military capacity.

Volunteer regiments were established under the auspices of the colonial government. Three of them will be examined in this chapter: the Natal Carbineers (NC), the Umvoti Mounted Rifles (UMR) and the Natal Mounted Rifles (NMR). For much of the nineteenth century, the regiments remained basically independent, bearing their own costs (in peace-time particularly) and administering themselves. This is particularly significant for this study because it marks them out as social institutions, just as much as repressive state apparatuses which is how they would be conceptualised within an Althusserian framework.

This chapter is not concerned to judge the military efficiency of settler military organisation. This is a task that has been attempted elsewhere (Laband and Thompson, 1990; Paterson, 1981; Paterson, 1985). Nevertheless it is necessary to remember what the settlers' military capacity was. Within the Colony, whites had a virtual monopoly on firearms. In Zululand, Africans had possessed many firearms but defeat in 1879 led to a reduction in the number. In addition, the *amabutho* system, upon which the military strength of the polity rested, was disestablished. It is true that African men continued to own traditional weapons, but equally, the military threat posed hereby was limited. By contrast, settler forces expanded steadily through this period. While there were worries expressed occasionally about the potential of settler forces to deal with a 'black threat', the presence of imperial troops and the overwhelming advantage of firepower, meant that any doubts about security were little more than *swart gevaar*.

For reasons, and in ways, which I will demonstrate below, the volunteer regiments served as a base for settler militarism. Militarism developed in the schools and through sport and came to envelop the colony as a whole. Militarism, of course, incorporated understandings and displays of masculinity which I have begun to unfold in previous chapters. It goes without saying that the regiments were single-sex, exclusively white institutions. In them, men could express (sometimes to excess) those aspects of masculinity shaped in the other institutions already discussed. Team work, perseverance, aggression, toughness, precision, competence, obedience and the protection of white 'brothers and sisters' were all drilled into members. Military heroes were made, revered, mythologized. Men like Duncan McKenzie became part of the ONF lore, symbols of settler masculinity. The growth of militarism throughout the colony established, in another way and through a complementary institution, hegemonic masculinity.

The military was part of the fabric of colonial life and the settlers were members of the military. Yet the military as an institution constituted a social node where the ONFs extended and reinforced the networks which were central to their social cohesion and influence. In fact it would be better to consider the military as being the generation point of specific values by which the ONFs identified themselves and disseminated their world view as well as an institution which provided status and was considered to be a mandatory aspect of class

membership. The military was also an institution which allowed for social integration. Particularly when the recruitment of settlers into regiments picked up, the class composition of membership became more diverse. The class ethos of the regiments was policed by the officers. New volunteers (and later draftees), became soldiers with regimental pride, and a set of class and gender values which accorded, at least in the areas touched by military life, closely with those of the ONFs.¹

The class nature of the regiments was an achievement, rather than something that flowed automatically from the creation of the regiments, or remained inertly within them once they were formed. The volunteer regiments were sites of contestation, not only about their class orientation, but also about their gender regime. Nowadays, challenges to the gender order are obvious, finding their way into headline news. Should women be allowed to serve? Should they be engaged in combat? Should gays be admitted? (Morgan, 1994). While such questions were inconceivable in the period under discussion, contemporary challenges serve to remind us that the gender order is prone to challenge too.

Section 1 The Military and Militarism

For much of the period between 1880 and 1920 Natal relied on an imperial military presence. Imperial troops were garrisoned in the colony continuously until 1906². Nevertheless, for a variety of reasons, settlers remained concerned about the 'security' situation in the colony. This concern was expressed in parliamentary debates and the press but more importantly, in persistent, indeed obsessive, preoccupation with the domestic military strength of the colony itself. Herein was the manifestation of the colony's militarism. Natal's military spent much less time at war than at peace. In the period under discussion, Natal's regiments were involved in three wars: two against 'white foes' (South African war (1899-1902) and First World war (1914-1918)) and one against the internal 'enemy' (Bambatha's rebellion (1906)). Despite the limited need for the use of military force, settler hawks in positions of political authority and a masculinist cadre of settlers pushed for an extension of the colony's military capacity. Militarism was not confined to the military commanders and their political allies. When the First World war occurred, Natal sent proportionately more men than any other province to fight. And it is to the men from Natal that the most heroic 'South African' moment of that war belongs: Delville Wood (Ruth Gordon, 1978, 57).

Reasons for militarization were couched in the language of danger - the blacks would rise up, the **boers** would invade, the Germans would challenge British rule. These fears were real enough, even if the danger itself was more imaginary than real (Krikler, 1993). But what actually was feared? Specific answers are seldom given to this question by people living at the time. It was an unstated and assumed fact that the 'way of life' held to be the essence of what Natal as a colony was about, was endangered. And who or what might endanger it? There were a range of suspects. The unruly native, the untamed savage, the non-conformist bouncer, an insensitive Colonial Office, a rebellious white working class. Obviously not all these foes could be militarily subjugated. But the military was not only about firepower and force. The military was about accommodating and elevating a particular stratum of colonial society and about cementing certain values. The white boys and men of the Old Natal Families and their

1 In the case of Durban's white tramway workers, for example, there was widespread enlistment to go on active service (van der Tang, 1996, 73).

2 Technically, a small imperial presence remained until 1914 when the South Staffordshires left Fort Napier. But military responsibility had effectively been taken over from the metropole by 1906 (Hatteraley, 1945, 51).

masculinist values injected a civil agenda into the Natal military, ensuring that that institution remained a key site of social power.

The groundwork for the militarism of the volunteer regiments was laid in the schools and on the sports fields. There, the notion of team-work was entrenched and the importance of bravery and self-sacrifice underlined. Further it provided, through such figures as Duncan McKenzie and George Leuchars, heroes for the colony. These heroes, apart from their symbolic importance, wielded considerable political power. Like many other commanders and senior officers of the Natal midland regiments, these men had political power. This either came with political office or via the occupation of powerful positions within the civil service.

Recent literature on the military in Europe at the turn of the century tells us that despite the revolutionary changes of the preceding centuries which elevated the bourgeoisie and its institutions, the military remained an important locus of power. It was undergoing professionalization which brought the new middle class into positions of command and transformed it into a bureaucratized institution. Nevertheless, it remained an easily identifiable caste-like social entity with substantial political influence (Mann, 1993). In the transformation of the military, old rituals and values were retained and accepted not only by the new officer corps, but by civil society which drew from the military its codes of behaviour (Nye, 1993). More recent studies have shown that militarist values can also effectively be disseminated via non-state ideologies and institutions (Gibson, 1994). The role of old boys' clubs and associations in this regard was suggested in chapter 5.

It is terribly obvious, but a point that needs to be made, that modern warfare has been constructed as a quintessentially masculine pursuit. Armies, by the same token, are quintessentially masculine institutions; manned and with militarist values that comfortably support views that boys are 'by nature' aggressive and therefore the logical protagonists in war.³ The continuing political prominence of the military in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was of profound gender importance. Not only was a male-exclusive institution central to the conduct of politics and influential in the passage of laws, it also put its imprint on social life. The continuing influence of militarism should not conceal the fact that the civil establishment had risen and overtaken the military in influence during this period. Expenditure on the civil establishment increased, having overtaken military expenditure in 1881. Nevertheless, Mann (with Giddens (cited in Marshall, 1994)) rejects the Foucauldian view that the military's influence was on the wane as other forms of surveillance began to dominate modernism's repressive mode. Domestic repression remained a dominant theme of military activity taking the form of presence, show and ultimately violence (Mann, 1993, 408).

The concept of militarism, puzzlingly, is seldom used in the historical literature dealing with military conflict in Natal and South Africa. There is exhaustive coverage of wars and rebellions, but the militarized social context is ignored. Somehow it is just accepted that the boers had commandos, the British army was either in the field or available for war and that disgruntled and dispossessed Africans could form *impis* and rebel. Soldiers and soldiering do not exist in a vacuum. They exist and occur when people believe in the need for or the danger of war. These beliefs are at the heart of militarism. Militarism is one component of the colony's hegemonic masculinity.

3 An attack on precisely such logic, which still operates today, comes from Brian Moon: "The correspondence of violence and masculinity must be seen ... in terms of two interconnected factors: first, the existence of systems which encode differential power relations (boss/worker, priest/parishioner, doctor/patient), and second, the systematic recruitment of men to the most powerful positions. It is certainly the case that men are the custodians of social organisation in which violence is a functional component. But the violence is primarily a feature of the systems, and it is the positioning of men within these systems that requires explanation" (Moon, 1992, 196).

Section 2 Natal's Volunteer Force

Up until 1855 the military capacity of Natal was in imperial hands. In 1854, however, Ordinance 8 was promulgated by the lieutenant governor allowing for the establishment of volunteer units. The preamble of the founding document of one of the first volunteer units formed read, "In a Country thickly populated by barbarous tribes it is generally determined on the part of the white population of this Town (Durban) to associate together for mutual benefit and protection" (du Plessis, 1975, 3). Reference to the 'Zulu threat', real or imagined, was to underpin much of the writing and talking which served to produce and disseminate a militarism through the colony.

It is still debated in military circles which regiment actually was the first formed (Cook, 1985). The regimental pride of Pietermaritzburg's Natal Carbineers is presently inflated with the claim, though the Natal Mounted Rifles (now based in Durban) still contest the issue. Both were formed in terms of the Ordinance in 1855. These mounted units were the mainstay of the colony's military establishment. In addition there were artillery and infantry regiments. Apart from the police force which could be called up in times of war, there was no permanent colonial military force.

Volunteer regiments were established in Britain in 1859 to counter the threat of French invasion and they "became a popular institution, whose spectacular annual manoeuvres or field days were treated as public holidays" (Mckenzie, 1992, 2). In Natal, volunteering in the mid-Victorian period had a similar feel about it. It "was a popular outlet for energy at a time when men were accustomed to tempt fortune in the performance of extravagant feats of personal or equestrian prowess" (Hattersley, 1945, 12). This description testifies to the concern amongst men at the time that they prove themselves by feats of daring, bravery and endurance. The gendered aspect of militarism will be explored in greater detail in section 5.

Volunteer regiments (including the Umvoti Mounted Rifles (formed 1864)) brought gentlemen together. Their rules and procedures gave them the distinction of clubs where membership was a privilege and the good name of the club sacrosanct. Command of a regiment was generally taken by a prominent local, often the magistrate. Later a few of the key positions of a regiment (e.g. commanding officer, regimental sergeant major) became paid positions. These provided limited opportunity for settlers, imbued with the British idea that a military career was noble and distinguished, to promote a military ethos within the colony.

As the end of the century approached, the military in Europe was becoming "more autonomous within the state (and) more capable of insulated infrastructural control over 'its' armed forces" (Mann, 1993, 505-6). It was bureaucratizing and professionalizing and often acted to repress popular notions of class and citizenship" (Mann, 1993, 402). These developments were not apparent in Natal's settler forces. Here the trend was to create military élan and preserve an elitist hierarchy. This served to consolidate the class character of settler society and to act as a balance to the local imperial military presence which was viewed at one and the same time as worthy of emulation and as an unwanted foreign intrusion in local matters. As we shall see in section 6, the settler military did become influential in local politics, but did so not from an autonomous military base, but via a process of social and political infiltration, using a host of overlapping memberships and networks to achieve the aim.

After the defeats at Isandhlwana (1879) and Majuba (1881) debates about the state of the colony's defence were given much air. In Europe at this time, conscription was becoming common. Apart from swelling numbers, the practice was valued for its civil role. Conscription

mixed the classes, preventing disloyalty on the basis of class and geographical affiliation. The major means of so doing was by strengthening authority through broadening "authoritative organisation". Modern transport and communication development enabled men to be located within large structures yet duped them into believing that they were fighting to protect local community rather than a grand impersonal value or nation. A major mechanism here was the creation of territorial units with affiliation to specific locales (Mann, 1993, 428-9). In Natal the military's civil role was somewhat different. The exclusion of blacks altogether from the volunteer regiments and the close scrutiny of membership meant that the regiments were beacons of class and race solidarity. There was no question of allowing blacks in. The class composition of settler society (at least in the midlands) was sufficiently homogenous for class 'disloyalty' not to be a serious problem. The regiments nevertheless operated to produce conformity of outlook in members, operating to initiate members into important class and race rituals or to transform members who lacked the basic educational, familial or social backgrounds into deserving affiliates of the core elite.

Throughout the period, laws were passed which expanded Natal's domestic military capacity. In 1885 the Volunteer Law was passed. 'Marching pay' was introduced which reduced the financial burden on volunteers. Membership of the regiments rose but not enough to silence demands for conscription. Settlers pushing for responsible government status demanded a permanent force to strengthen their claim for greater independence from Britain. These arguments directly challenged the elitism of the volunteering tradition. Yet both supporters of conscription and defenders of volunteering were proponents of militarism. They shared views about the importance of a military experience for manhood and about blacks being the 'enemy'. The debates therefore pursued a tortuous route with other factors such as the right of the individual complicating matters further. The NC's Commanding Officer, Lieut-Colonel E M Greene, a staunch traditionalist, believed any form of 'compulsion' to be 'repugnant'.⁴ He opposed the 1893 recommendations of the Archibald Committee on the colony's defence capacity which advocated compulsory three year enlistment arguing that it would be the "death blow to mounted volunteering in the colony" (Hattersley, 1945, 27).

This position rested on the principle of democratic exclusivism. It was believed that the regiments retaining the volunteer ethos should retain the associated traditions of election of officers. The idea that the regiments were basically a peer group in which the consent of all ensured military and social efficacy dominated⁵.

The debate got hotter once responsible government had been awarded in 1893. Natal became liable for its own defence. Imperial forces were to begin withdrawing after five years. To meet the increased demands for troops another Volunteer Act was passed in 1895. The act aimed "to provide for the Better Organization, Regulation, and Discipline of the Volunteer Force of the Colony" (Goetzsche, 1977, 96). It set out and coded orders, discipline, punishments, methods of appeal, recovery of fines, imprisonment, privileges and death compensation (widows, for example, would get £52). The act gave the Commandant of Volunteers the power to co-ordinate and rationalise the colony's forces. Under the act, the volunteer force grew yearly until war broke out in 1899. But of 12 000 men available for service, under the law only 2000 were actually liable for service. In war time this was a clear problem. So in 1903 the Militia Act was passed which "imposed on every class of European inhabitant, between certain ages (18-50), the liability to undergo military training and service" (Goetzsche, 1977, 92). Conscription had arrived. Schools were not exempt either. Uniformity in cadet training had been achieved in 1896 where the first general encampment had attracted 1200 boys (Hattersley, 1945, 30).

4 Evidence, Colonial Defence Commission, 1903, 126.

5 There was something to this argument: conscription in New Zealand (1916) produced a large gap between officers and men and aggravated antagonism between the two (Phillips, 1987, 172).

Cadet training now became compulsory from the age of ten. Yet the power of the volunteer lobby ensured that the regiments were not disbanded or reorganised. Furthermore, the elective principle in officer selection was retained but diluted. The fighting force remained all-white, though blacks could be called out "for employment as scouts, drivers, labourers, stretcher-bearers"(Goetzsche, 197?, 93).

Hattersley describes the transition well.

The 'nineties thus represented a transition period in colonial volunteering. In mid-Victorian times, it had been an aspect of social life. It was pretty haphazard with very little government supervision and intervention - efficiency was a function of officers, not of some externally imposed and monitored standard. Paid regimental staffs did not exist nor were drill instructors attached to regiments. Elected officers were expected to know drill and teach it. (Hattersley, 1950, 28-9)

In 1906 the Active Militia stood at 5000 with 15000 reserves. This meant that about 40% of the colony's white males (the white population (men and women) was about 100 000) were actually within the military. When one considers that boys under ten and those not at school, plus men over 50 were not eligible, the percentage is much higher. On this basis it is possible to say that most white men in the colony by 1906 had direct acquaintance with the local military.

Within two years of Union a totally new system was in place. The 1912 Defence Act put the military onto a new footing, diluting local regimental particularity and forcing all units to conform to a centrally determined structure. This threatened the existence of the volunteer units but concerted protest prevented their contemplated dissolution (Hattersley, 1950, 50).

Section 3 The Regiments of the Midlands

The volunteer regiments were, at conception, units for gentlemen. A member had to provide his own horse, saddlery and uniform. A small horse allowance was paid and after 1913 a uniform allowance. In 1903 it was estimated that the costs to a volunteer for three years' service was £46/15.⁶ Apart from the financial costs, volunteers were expected to attend parades and an annual ten day encampment. For farmers this could be most disruptive and some employers resisted by refusing to either permit employees to attend, or to pay them in their absence.

NATAL CARBINEERS

The Carbineers were established in Pietermaritzburg in 1855. The NC attracted the largest membership of all the volunteer regiments and used this, its age and its war record to claim domestic military preeminence. As Victor Fly put it, "This was THE midlands regiment. The pride of Pietermaritzburg, it was idolised on parade, by dogs, **picanins** and **thombazanes**" (Fly interview, 1992). From the outset, men of the midlands "figured prominently" (Wood, 1946, 2). The unit was organised into regionally based troops. This were to be found, for example, in the Karkloof, Boston, Eston, Estcourt, Richmond and Impendhle. In 1910 the NC "allied to the Imperial Cavalry Regiment, the 6th Dragoon Guards (Carabineers (sic)) Prince of Wales Dragoon Guards" becoming the first colonial regiment to claim this honour (Hurst, 1945, 30). The prestige of the unit was also testified by the importance and subsequent influence of the

6 Evidence of Capt G B O Moe, UMR, Colonial Defence Commission, 1903, 230.

commanding officer. From 1881, the commanding officers were: Lt Col W Royston (1881-91), Lt Col E M Greene (1891-1902) and Lt Col D McKenzie (1902-1907). Each of these men went on to higher things. Royston became the Commandant of Volunteers and McKenzie became Commandant of the Militia and led Natal's forces in the 1906 rebellion and in German South West Africa (1914). Greene became Minister of Railways and Harbours in Natal's last parliament.

The Carbineers were involved in all the minor skirmishes and wars in the colony. They were the first volunteer unit to suffer losses (1873) and bore very heavy losses at Isandhlwana (1879). They also had men killed in the 1899-1902 war and in the Bambatha rebellion.

By the 1890s the Carbineers had become an integral part of Maritzburg life. The Regimental Ball and Gymkhana had joined the Regimental Race Meeting as important social occasions, and the annual encampment had become a major event. Their standing in the community was high and in 1897 a contingent was sent to London to celebrate the 60th year of Queen Victoria's reign. (Coughlan and Paterson, 1988, 114)

After the First World War the NC's existence was jeopardised by reorganisation in the Union Defence Force. A Natal Witness campaign in 1920 saved the regiment. In the 1920s a NC Veterans Association was created which strengthened the links with the city and in 1922 the regiment began parades in the capital after seven years' quiescence. In 1929 it affiliated with the Hilton College Cadets, formed in 1872, the oldest cadet unit in the Commonwealth (Coughlan and Paterson, 1988, 115).

NATAL MOUNTED RIFLES

The Natal Mounted Rifles (NMR) was the product of an amalgamation in 1888 of the Alexandra Mounted Rifles (Umzinto), Umzimkulu Mounted Rifles (Port Shepstone), Victoria Mounted Rifles (Verulam) and the Durban Mounted Rifles. The unit was unwieldy because it covered such a wide area so in 1894 it was divided into two separate regiments. The Border Mounted Rifles (BMR) was established in Ixopo and the NMR continued with its headquarters in Durban.

The NMR saw action in the South African war and Bambatha's rebellion, frequently campaigning alongside the Carbineers. On 1 January 1914 a new military district system was introduced. Natal and Transkei became a single military district causing a reorganisation of regiments. The BMR and NMR were amalgamated, becoming the 3rd NMR regiment, commanded by William Arnott. It had three troops: one drawing its members from the North Coast, the second from Durban and the South Coast and the third from Ixopo, Dronkvei, Polela and Harding. It mobilised for the 1914 rebellion on the highveld and was involved in two skirmishes with rebels in the OFS before demobilizing. The regiment also participated in the German South West African campaign, taking a leading role in the Battle of Gibeon in April 1915.

The regiment remained popular despite the inroads made into regimental identity and volunteering by the 1914 reorganisation (Goetsche, 1977, 133). In 1920 when the regiment called for volunteers, an "astonishing" number "of desirable recruits ... came forward voluntarily, without compulsion. The deeply engrained volunteer spirit, which had been so noticeable a feature in the past, was persisting, notwithstanding the decidedly changed outlook" (Goetzsche, 1977, 152). There were other explanations. Young men who had not been old enough to serve felt shame, felt inadequate (Fussell, 1977, 110). And military men like Duncan McKenzie played on this. In an address at Hilton College after the war, McKenzie said

"much as we may feel that this Great War has done little good to humanity would you have your Boys and your friends do other than they did - would you have them stay at home and live ashamed and without honour, no Ladies and Gentlemen, you can easier bear the loss of an honoured one, than the shame of a slacker and these brave men would not have done other - than they did for they knew their duty too well" (McKenzie, n/d, 21). He concluded, "they died the noblest death a man can die - a death that any one might be proud to die - the death of a soldier - fighting for his King and Country, and doing his duty to the last" (McKenzie, n/d, 22).

UMVOTI MOUNTED RIFLES

The Umvoti Mounted Rifles (UMR) was founded in Greytown in 1864. Its first commander was local magistrate, Ashe Windham, who was elected to this position at the meeting of initiation. Windham was educated at Rugby, Eton and Trinity College, Cambridge. He was also to become chairman of Pietermaritzburg's prestigious Victoria Club (see chapter 5). He set the unit along the road to being a gentleman's regiment by imposing strict penalties for bad behaviour and enforcing stringent entry requirements (du Plessis, 1975, 9).

For a time the UMR was amalgamated with the NC but in 1893 it became separate and independent. The Unit was involved in the wars of 1879, 1899-1902 and 1914-1918, in addition to the 1906 rebellion. In the latter campaign, it was commanded by George Leuchars, a local farmer and Minister of Government.

Section 4 The Men who Joined the Regiment

The membership of the regiments changed over time, reflecting compositional changes in the settler population. In the 1860s and 1870s, the membership of the Carbineers, for example, was drawn from the families who settled early.⁷ The list of men who set off to deal with Langelibalele is replete with well-established settler families, many of them Byrne settlers. Wheelwright (prominent in the Natal civil service, providing Natal with a Chief Native Commissioner), Vanderplank (the family which introduced wattle to Natal), Shepstone (synonymous with native administration), Raw (Nottingham Road farmers), Royston (to provide commanding officers of the Carbineers and the irregular unit, Royston's Horse), Pepworth (well-known family of lawyers), Erskine (prominent in civil service, (Sir David was Colonial Secretary)), Otto (prominent landowning family in the Karkloof who gave their name to Otto's Bluff), Lindsay (a farming family which provided the NC with a commanding officer), King (earliest settlers in Nottingham Road), Speirs (a prominent and numerous farming family in Lidgetton) (Speirs, 1985), Shaw (farmers, lawyers and a family renowned for their polo skills) (Shaw, 1971), Fannin (original owners of the farm Dargle - lawyers, farmers, civil servants) (Pearse et al, 1973, 7). Virtually all of these families sent their sons to Hilton or Maritzburg College and many were intermarried.

One should not exaggerate the homogeneity of membership at this point. Amongst the above families there were large differences of wealth, but the unifying forces of education and marriage seem to have overridden or at least to have reduced the significance of such differences.

By the 1880s, the settler population was growing. Whereas members of the regiments knew one another personally before joining the regiment, or at least knew family members, it

⁷ The membership of these families lasted throughout the period, and was augmented by newly arrived midland farmers. Natal Carbineer Archive, Roll of Officers on the Reserve List.

increasingly became the case that 'unknown' men would volunteer for membership. Membership was not automatic and debates began about who should be eligible. Considerations of finance were a convenient gatekeeping mechanism. Not all could afford to be members. Opinion in Natal on this point was divided. Some felt that in the interests of a common, white, Natalian identity, such obstacles should not be an impediment to membership. Others staunchly held to an elitist line.

The regiments transformed themselves, becoming more open as time went on. The 'black threat' unified whites and the spread of hegemonic masculinist and class values served to homogenise the calibre of aspirant member. Regiments still presented themselves as elite, but now the claim was based not on being purely constituted of ONF stock, but on the quality of the soldiering. Reviewing the troops at a NC camp in 1910 Lord Methuen (the Governor) declared: "I do not think you could wish for a finer body of men than have been assembled in this camp, and I say so not in a general way but because I do not suppose that if you were to search the whole world round you would find men who are finer horsemen, who have to a greater degree the instincts of being good shots, or who know so well how to make use of ground" (Stalker, 1912, 287-8).

A major reason why the regiments were able to attract members 'of the right stamp' is to be found in the cadet system. Education for white youth did not become compulsory until 1909 (Behr, 1971, 182) but for those who went to school (and the ONFs enthusiastically supported educational achievement), cadets was a central activity. And when the education system was elaborated and cadets became compulsory, the enrolment of boys in cadets was impressive.⁸ In 1908, there were 3277 cadets organised into 57 school corps.⁹

Kadets

Cadets alone cannot explain the love of war which the high enrolment of old boys for active service in the First World war testify to. 371 Old Hiltonians fought in the First World war and 47 were killed (McKenzie, n/d, 21). 91 Old Collegians died in WW1¹⁰. Cadets however, did instil in schoolboys a love of guns and the idea of war. As the Rector of Michaelhouse put it, "Boys leave this school with a taste for military work"¹¹. In explaining the continuing influence of the military in Europe, Mann notes the importance of "the primacy of the command principle" (McNeill, 1983)" (Mann, 1993, 429). This principle enshrined obedience and ensured that mutiny and disloyalty were rare. The principle was established in the schools and their cadet corps. Prefects for example, were given many duties and responsibilities. They had to monitor bad language and to receive complaints from young boys about bullying. They had limited corrective power but in this situation both punished and punisher were imbued with the command principle (McKenzie, n/d, 12). These ingredients fueled the development of settler militarism.

While there were changes in the schools and in the social values which inhabited them, it is the continuity between McKenzie's Hilton of the 1870s and Maritzburg College in 1908 that is striking. Giving the speech at the annual prize-giving, Governor Sir Matthew Nathan offered the following thoughts:

The conditions are such that every boy has to learn to be a ruler, for he is to remember that Natal is much more than a self-governing colony, for its small white community is

8 There is nothing surprising about this: the record of English public schools shows that these boarding schools effectively channelled their boys into senior positions in the military (Devlin and Williams, 1992, 292).

9 Natal, *Annual Report of the Commandant-General, Natal Colonial Forces for the year 1908* (1909), 2.

10 *The Pietermaritzburg College Magazine*, IV, 49, June 1924.

11 *S. Michael's Chronicle*, III, 9, October 1914, 19.

not only to govern itself, but it is also directly responsible for the peace and happiness of ten times its number of alien races. Practically all the boys here will have to take part in the ruling of this country, most of them only as electors, while many of them will, no doubt, become members of Parliament, and a few of them magistrates and ministers. Hence it is primarily necessary that they should acquire in this College those qualities of fearlessness, patience, broad sympathy, and quiet unassuming strength, which have enabled boys trained in the public schools in England to rule hundreds of millions of natives in Asia and Africa, and to maintain the Pax Britannica among them.

Nathan continued that an important means of achieving these aims was via the cadets where boys learnt to "obey and to respect authority, learn in the best way to command and to make their own authority respected".¹²

Nor did the political disaster of Union affect the schools' commitments to cadets. In 1924 at the unveiling of a memorial to MC's war dead, it was remarked that

the boys of the College have always taken a high place in the cadet movement, in shooting, and in every form of physical training, and with such a record it is not surprising that the school afforded a large number of recruits. ... They (the fallen) serve as examples of bravery and devotion to a great cause, and they help to cultivate the spirit of loyalty and sense of duty which must have its effect on the future manhood of the country. They also help to show us of what our boys are capable when King and Country call on their services, that patriotism is an inherent virtue of our people, and that no sacrifice is too great when the principles of justice and right are violated.¹³

Links between the cadets, volunteer regiments and ONFs were very important in spinning an apparently seamless web between boyhood and adulthood, between school and army and between the ONFs. The links were fostered in a host of different ways. Duncan McKenzie, for example, kept up his associations with the school by attending anniversary celebrations and giving occasional addresses. It was his son, Lieut-Colonel A G McKenzie, then commander of NC, who assisted the affiliation of Hilton College Cadets to NC in 1929. As Hattersley proudly commented of this union, "In Natal's senior volunteer regiment and in its oldest public school, the spirit of colonial Natal lives on" (Hattersley, 1950, 62).

Not surprisingly, military men like NC Commander, Col E M Greene, were very much in favour ("heart and soul") of the cadet movement.¹⁴ They regularly used cadet parades to strengthen links between cadets and volunteer regiments.¹⁵ And the demand for these links did not only come from the military establishment. Ernest Barns, Headmaster of Maritzburg College gave evidence to the Colonial Defence Commission in 1903:

Question: Do you think that a boy, when he leaves school, would like to be linked, in any way, with his old school?

Answer: I think he would like to be put on a proper footing. I notice that the boys of the College are very fond of their old school, and are continually in connection with us, in one way or another, and the Cadet Corps would be another link - something between the Cadet and the Volunteers" (179).

12 *Maritzburg College Magazine*, 111, 26, June 1908, 9.

13 *Maritzburg College Magazine*, IV, 49, June 1924, 32.

14 Colonial Defence Commission, 1903, 124.

15 *The Hiltonian*, 5, 9, July 1906, 16.

As time went on the volunteer regiments attracted men of rougher background. Dr James McCord, the American missionary, described them as "youthful Colonial rowdies" (McCord, 1957, 120). The prospects of 'action' encouraged the new, urbanised white population to join.¹⁶ One such man, an enthusiastic member of the BMR, angrily expressed his displeasure at not being called up to fight in 1906: "It is downright rubbish to say that the natives will give trouble here (southern boundary), and yet the regiment is kept idle! ... there is scarcely a member who would not go to the front at the present time ... Half-pay is better than stay-at-home, while fighting is on" (Natal Mercury 19 May 1906 cited in Goetzsche, 1977, 107). Nor were all ONFs obedient to the gentlemanly codes of the regiments. Hattersley observes that "Volunteering was a popular outlet for energy at a time when men were accustomed to tempt fortune in the performance of extravagant feats of personal or equestrian prowess" (Hattersley, 1950, 12). Not surprisingly, things occasionally got out of hand. In the Ixopo Mounted Rifles for example, "Discipline apparently was not of a high order and after particularly insubordinate acts by several of the members the Ixopo Mounted Rifles were disbanded by Government Proclamation of 19th July, 1880" (Hurst, 1945, 56).¹⁷

It was no easy task to preserve the aggression and winnow out inappropriate behaviour. Elitists, like NC commander Greene, a strict disciplinarian and moralist, rejected many volunteers. "If I have the slightest idea that a man is disposed to imbibe too freely I won't have him the feeling among all the officers is that we will only have decent men in the regiment".¹⁸ Other officers, on the other hand, were unfussed by drinking and swearing, being concerned only with a man's ability to fight. Colonel Hilmar Bru-de-Wold, for example, swore a great deal - he was renowned for his brand of Norwegian cussing. Like many, he found that "violent expressiveness and crudity was one way of relieving tension" (Phillips, 1987, 183).

The class homogeneity of the regiments was challenged by the issue of conscription (the Militia Act of 1903 and the Union Defence Act of 1912). A stiff and largely successful rearguard action was fought by officers like Colonel Greene to defend the class nature of the regiments. This may have been because 'poor whites' and other men who did not fit were converted through the regimes of masculinity, into desirable, manly soldiers. Equally, it may have been an effect of the selection procedures. Probably, it was a combination of both. The result was that the gap between officers and men was not great. Commanding officers like McKenzie and Arnott had a high regard for the ability of their men. This should be contrasted with the British army where generals considered the (working class) rank and file to be worth little more than cannon fodder (Fussell, 1977, 13).

The officer corps of the regiments changed over time. Initially commissioned officers were educated civil servants like Windham and Barter (Chief Magistrate of Pietermaritzburg). Subsequently ONFs came to fill positions. These were gentlemen officers, rarely full-time soldiers, but interested in this institution as a way of entrenching and spreading family prestige. There were good reasons why the ONFs were suitable for commissions. They could afford the costs (commissions were purchased), and were well enough known to get the elective support necessary. Furthermore they were for the most part educated. As the military developed education became more important. Officers needed to read maps, handle logistics and have a knowledge of strategy. In Britain where this development occurred, an education did not **replace** class position as a criterion for admission to the officer corps, it simply fused with it (Mann, 1993, 430). In Natal, the process was slightly different. Since the white

16 The prospect of a 'good fight' was too good for many men to turn down. In the 1879 war 1193 of Chelmsford's 18000 troops were 'irregular colonial horse'. This was a high percentage of the male settler population and all were volunteers (Laband, 1992, 46).

17 Amateur historian of Ixopo, Michael Johnson, disputes Hurst's view, arguing that the Ixopo unit was disbanded when numbers dropped below 20. See Government Gazette, 19 July 1880.

18 Colonial Defence Commission, 1903, 127.

secondary schooling system was little differentiated, it became possible for recent settlers by dint of hard work, state support and access to education facilities to enter leadership positions. Whereas in Britain, Mann comments that the sons of industry and commerce were virtually absent from the officer corps, in Natal men entering leadership positions came from a wide range of economic class positions.

Section 5 The Militarism and Masculinity

The origins of militarism are both well-understood and hazy. Amongst those causes commonly cited would be the role of bellicose politicians, economic crises and the media. In this period the role of Boy's Own Paper is well documented (Richards, 1992; Swart, 1994). In this section, the commitment to hegemonic masculinity amongst the volunteers themselves will be considered as a major contribution to the colony's militarism.

Amongst volunteers there flourished a set of values which underscored and defined colonial militarism. This was not an expansionist militarism such as that found in Europe, rather it was the militarism that produced belonging, that evoked an 'other', an enemy.

A key element of the value system, as Nye has noted for France, was honour. It

traditionally regulated relations among men, summed up the prevailing ideals of manliness, and marked the boundaries of masculine comportment. Its codes sprang from the social and political arrangements of male-dominated warrior societies in which the possession of honor, together with its wealth and its perquisites, was essential for elite status. With time, the company of honorable men expanded to accommodate worthy individuals of non-noble blood; but, even though the criteria for the possession of honor had broadened sufficiently at the threshold of the twentieth century to include most men, the connection between honor and masculinity remained intact and was affirmed. (Nye, 1993, vii)

In Europe generally, but in France in particular, the pinnacle of the honour code was the duel by which individual honour was protected and the honour code perpetuated. By the 1870s, duels in Natal were outlawed but an honour code was still very much alive. Honour regulated personal relationships. To accuse a man of lying or cowardice, for example, was to impugn his honour. But metropolitan France differed from colonial Natal in important ways. The sharp class divisions of modern France (which the honour code succeeded in straddling) were absent. And in Natal there were blacks.

The concept of the team was as important as honour. Teams were central to the organisation of schools, sports and regiments. Two models of the racially exclusive teams were constructed to organise social interaction and collective behaviour in the regiments. Officers like Bru-de-Wold built a team by stressing oneness, by narrowing the social gap. When Bru-de-Wold swore he was making himself the same as the humble mule drivers who were noted "as the finest swearers in the regiment, better even than the farriers" (Hurst, 1945, 84). On the other hand, men like Duncan McKenzie led by example. His model of the team was hierarchical: of a captain sharing in the challenges and glories equally with his team. The team was the product of the men as well as officers. *Esprit de corps* cannot be foisted onto a regiment, it has to be built. Much of that building is done by soldiers associating themselves with the regiment. As General Jan Smuts put it in his foreword to Hurst's military history:

"The ordinary private soldier's pride in his own platoon and in the wider prowess of his regiment is the spirit that gains victories" (Hurst, 1945, foreword).

An integral part of the team is the hierarchy. Regimental routine constantly stressed hierarchy. In promoting greater emphasis on parade ground drill, Commander Nicholas William Chiazzari (an old Hiltonian) said, "The idea of drill is not only to make a man perfect in drill, but also to make him amenable to the word of command".¹⁹ Anybody bucking the system, challenging the hierarchy implicitly or explicitly, was brought into line by military discipline. The rules of the NC made it "lawful for the commanding officer, on any member appearing at muster in a slovenly state, either in person or accoutrements, to inflict a fine, not exceeding 5s., on any offender who has been twice warned, and if the irregularities are further persisted in, after the infliction of such fine, to order a court martial on the party so transgressing" (Stalker, 1912, 218-9).

All the regiments consciously fostered the team metaphor. A team needs an identity: a badge, colours and distinguishing rallying calls. Regiments had these. A unit without a motto or badge considered itself incomplete. This was the condition of the BMR in 1899 when Governor Sir Walter Hely-Hutchinson visited the officers mess. He is reputed to have said "Ah, this is Spartan, Rethman (the commanding officer), and what I like to see; rough and ready."²⁰ "The regimental Medical Officer, Captain H T Platt, thereupon picked up a top boot with spur attached and firmly setting it on the bare table amongst the empty bottles, said, 'This is the only plate we have, sir'" (Hurst, 1945, 100). This led to the motto and the top boot and spur as the badge.

Regiments also all had 'war cries' and mottos. It is not clear when 'war cries' were adopted but the first reference I found was to the NMR motto 'Just and Frank' taken in 1888 (Hurst, 1945, 83). This was replaced in 1914 with 'Rough and Ready'. In 1898 the regiment adopted the war cry of the Durban Bellair Troop, 'Qobolowayo-ji'. This was said "to have been the war-cry of a famous Zulu regiment at the time of Tshaka, and is a challenge or cry of defiance. Another Zulu cry still used in the Regiment is "'Se si Fikile,' (sic) meaning 'now we have arrived, so all is well'" (NMR, n/d).²¹

The UMR also had a war cry, "Hubu, hubu, hubu, hubu". Hurst comments that "it is not clear when and where this originated, but it is a startling and fearsome cry when shouted together by hundreds of men" (Hurst, 1945, 46). Du Plessis, official UMR historian, says the war cry ("Mahubu hubu") was borrowed from the Zululand Mounted Rifles after amalgamation in 1912 (du Plessis, 1975, 22).

This is not the place to explore it, but the creation of a military identity drew heavily on existing metropolitan as well as indigenous value systems. The military identity was not, however, locked ineluctably to the discourse from which its emblematic identity was created. Take, for example, the 'Zulu' war cries. These made sense in a period when the ONF boys had linguistic and emotional ties with their Zulu-speaking peers (see chapter 4). But as racial identities hardened, the war cries no longer testified to a connection across racial and linguistic barriers, but became part of a colonial discourse that was largely antagonistic to pre-modern idiom. Such war-cries then became part of a settler culture in which the people who uttered them had

19 Colonial Defence Commission, 1903, 182.

20 John Frederick Rethman (1852-1936) was a farmer, trader and politician. In 1890 he was elected to parliament for Umzimkulu and after Union represented the area on the provincial council.

21 According to H C Lugg (quoted in Goetzache, 1977, 52) the Qobolwayo war cry originated from the "hunting song (or chant) of natives living in the Valley of a Thousand Hills". In the 1906 Rebellion another war cry was used: "'Se si fikile,' meaning in Zulu 'Now we have arrived therefore all is well'" (Goetzache, 1977, 86).

little affinity, liking or sympathy for the cultures and people who had inspired them in the first place.

A colonial identity was constructed in the regiments but the process was complicated by the ambiguous relationship with the metropole. Volunteers disliked the arrogance of imperial troops and regarded their officers as ignorant intruders (Phillips, 1987, 135). At the 1873 debacle at Bushman's Nek, colonial temperatures were raised by stories that Durnford, the imperial officer in command, had criticised the NC troops under his command. "(I) heard him (Durnford) say something about 'If we were Englishmen'. Someone replied that it would be madness to stand here, in fact we had lost confidence in our leader" (Testimony of Sgt Varty in Pearse et al, 1973, 28). By the turn of the century, the distinction was commonly made between colonials of "the better class" and "young men that come from England (who) ... are incapable of doing work".²² Stalker, the anglophile historian of the NC, conversely glowed in the knowledge that "Some of the Imperial Officers in Maritzburg who witnessed the mobilization remarked that they had never seen, nor known, such smart work even amongst the Regular Forces" (Stalker, 1912, 203).

The progress of developing a Natal identity separate and in some areas divergent from that of the metropole accelerated after the granting of responsible government in 1893. Feelings of loyalty to the empire never disappeared (they are with us still as bumper stickers of 'Natal: The Last Colony' remind us) but were periodically diluted. When the imperial government attempted to prevent the execution of Bambatha rebels, loyalty to Britain ebbed. When war was declared against Germany, it soared.

A Natal identity woven around militarist themes, potentially faced problems of another kind. At this time, in Britain, a pacifist movement which included the Bloomsbury set (particularly Bertrand Russell and the gay author, Lytton Strachey) was making itself felt. It combined a critique of empire and bourgeois culture, with a rejection of war as a legitimate way of prosecuting politics and solving differences. In Natal, I have not come across any evidence of a comparative colonial impulse. The closest I came to such an example was the case of Donald McKenzie, the eldest of the McKenzie brothers. Unlike his famous brothers, Donald lived a low key life as farmer. Of all the McKenzie boys, he alone did not attend Hilton College, a fact which his grand-nephew cites to explain his friendliness towards Africans and his dislike for the competitive and hierarchical values that came out of the school system. Donald's son, Archibald, served in the First World war. Warfare, the behaviour of the officer corps and his first observation of white poverty, converted him to Fabianism. Archibald subsequently avoided all contact with his regiment (Pat McKenzie interview, 1993). Here we come closest to open rejection of the ONF norms. More common, thought nevertheless infrequent, was dissidence around the issues of conflict, rather than conflict itself. So, for example, whether it was appropriate to fight against the **boers** in 1899-1902 was an issue which divided some ONFs. But here, there was no disagreement over militarism per se. It was accepted that military solutions were appropriate, and that its contribution to masculinity important. In short, a dissident gender position on warfare did not exist in the colony.

The metaphor of the team was particularly efficacious when a rival team could be invoked. In the colonial context, the Zulu army conveniently provided opposition. Admiration for the other team was frequently expressed: during the 1879 war the "dash, elan and fearlessness" of Zulu warriors was widely admired (Laband, 1993, 159).

22 CSO 2849, Evidence of Magistrate J C C Chadwick to Police Commission, 1904, 2.

Yet Africans were also seen as menacing (Laband, 1993, 49). Fussell describes the need to demonize or 'otherise' the enemy. "'We' are all here on this side; 'the enemy' is over there. 'We' are individuals with names and personal identities; 'he' is a mere collective entity. We are visible; he is invisible. We are normal; he is grotesque. Our appurtenances are natural; his, bizarre. He is not as good as we are."... Nevertheless, he threatens us and must be destroyed, or, if not destroyed, contained and disarmed. Or at least patronized" (Fussell, 1977, 75). There developed a 'versus habit' (a term redolent of teamplay) requiring the representation of difference as being so gross as to require eradication (Fussell, 1977, 79).

Not all whites were frightened of blacks. As we saw in chapter 4, many had grown up with African children, spoke the Zulu language and were familiar with African customs and traditions. The elaboration of racial codes within colonial society and the creation of racist legal and administrative barriers plus the instances of settler wars against the Zulu polity gradually fostered a society-wide prejudice. With the passage of time, the ambiguity which had allowed white and black people to relate to one another without race being a barrier was eroded and replaced by an unbridgeable gulf.

By the turn of the century, as Marks remarks, white attitudes towards Africans were "a curious blend of paternalism, fear, and contempt" (Marks, 1970, 11). The militarist angle on race was unapologetic and straightforward. In the wake of the 1873 rebellion, the view was expressed by the Natal Mercury that "immediate and inflexible severity will mean true and lasting mercy" (Guest, 1976, 39). A similar view held in 1906. "Profiting by the history and experience of much native warfare in South Africa it was recognised as imperative that no early set-back to the European forces should be sustained, for even a simple and small reverse would raise the whole country and might prove disastrous. Commanders were enjoined to plan with the utmost care and caution, to strike with surprise, suddenness and force and to follow up with vigour and thoroughness. This was the policy followed by the field commanders and it proved most effective and singularly economical in casualties to the attackers and most expensive to the rebels" (Hurst, 1945, 90). In a common case, the Secretary of Native Affairs investigated complaints against the UMR of flogging during 1906. Captain George Moe justified the assault: "The natives in question were punished for insolent behaviour and for not showing the required respect to the King's uniform. Strong measures had to be resorted to to teach the natives, who had utterly got out of hand in and around the Mapumulo District, to pay the due respect to the white man".²³

There was another angle to the militarist outlook on blacks. The view was held that 'Zulus' were very good warriors. While some contested the wisdom of providing them with arms, many believed that under white supervision that would be of great value. Colonel Benningfield, for example, stated in 1904: "[T]he Zululand Police are a splendid body of men, and have done excellent service when required ... I do not think you have to fear the Zulus. I think they will always take our part. ... I think they would be very useful, especially in the event of a native rising". Asked by a member of the Colonial Defence Commission: "Indians versus Natives?", he answered, "Very good indeed. I do not think there is any great love between them".²⁴ The qualities that supposedly made a 'Zulu' such a good soldier were obedience, ferocity, toughness. Yet the dark, unknown but threatening, quality of the 'other' was held also to contain some of these ingredients. It was considered natural that Africans were warlike and would fight among themselves. This was considered most desirable amongst military men. J W Shepstone believed that "The faction fight keeps up jealousy. It is a healthy thing as far as the

23 SNA 1/1/340, 1224/1906. Statement by Capt Moe, 30 April 1906. Colonel Bru-de-Wold fully approved such measures (SNA 1/1/340, 1399/06).

24 Colonial Defence Commission, 1903, 73-5.

Natives are concerned, because they let off steam in that way".²⁵ William Arnott had a similar view: "I don't think the Government should be too hard on them, because a little letting off of steam on each other saves them from letting it off on us".²⁶ And the NC's Col E M Greene's view was: "I have always looked upon the faction fight as an admirable institution".²⁷ The military's view of the African was thus quite simple: if he could be harnessed, made to understand the rules, then he could become a part of the team. If not, then he was dangerous and not to be trusted.

The danger which Africans represented was most powerfully captured in the image of black man raping white woman. As Vron Ware puts it, "in any colony, the degree to which white women were protected from the fear of sexual assault was a good indication of the level of security felt by the colonial authorities" (Ware, 1992, 38). In chapter 4, we saw how *swart gevaar* was often expressed at times of insecurity and frequently took the form of fear about or expressions of outrage at sexual assault on white women. One of the responses to this was to arm women and teach them to shoot (Wood, 1946, 3). Another response, loudly heard in the aftermath of the Bambatha rebellion, was for stricter racial segregation.²⁸ Men responded to the call to arms to defend their womenfolk. "White women provided a symbol of the most valuable property known to white man and it was to be protected from the ever-encroaching and disrespectful black man at all costs" (Ware, 1992, 38).

And so in order to protect white women (in effect themselves and their own masculinity and notions of empire and civilization), white men endured a variety of hardships which were inscribed within hegemonic masculinity.

A soldier was expected to endure physical hardship, and to endure it cheerfully. Part of being a soldier was not complaining. Not complaining was part of military obedience. The rigours of camp life in peacetime provided many opportunities for the soldier to experience these hardships. Once hostilities commenced, the soldiers could then be expected to cope with an arduous regime. Toughness became a virtue, rather like the ability of a long-distance runner to finish a marathon. In 1873 most of reports of the Bushman's Pass debacle focussed on the heroic achievement of getting to the top of the pass. Durnford, the commanding officer was "pulled back by his horse, rolled many feet down a precipice, dislocated his shoulder, and otherwise injuring him in the head and body. ... Full of energy, however, he struggled on to the top..." (Pearse et al, 1973, 11). In 1906 the NC again had to cope with a very difficult terrain. "The column marched along the bridle path across the 'Devil's Gorge' at the Insuzi to the Ntingine, then to the Madhlosi Mountain on the Qudeni range. A terrible journey it was! The Insuzi river lay about 1,000 feet beneath and a slip would have been fatal in almost every case. It took three hours to cross the drift in the dark. ... after being in the saddle for fourteen hours the column rested" (Stalker, 1912, 189).

Soldiers were also expected to risk their lives. Here the military requirement that one put one's life at risk, dovetailed with the soldier's code of honour, for to refuse the risk the halo of death was a stain on one's honour. As Nye reminds us, honour "was never secure, (it) required constant reaffirmation, and was always open to challenge" (Nye, 1993, 13). Militarism as an ideology thus fed hegemonic masculinity by promoting war and by creating men who believed that death in battle was the most glorious, the most manly, of ends. And this was not just a male sentiment. Charlotte Moor (wife of the future Prime Minister, Robert Frederick), wrote

25 Colonial Defence Commission, 1903, 103.

26 Colonial Defence Commission, 1903, 108.

27 Evidence, Colonial Defence Commission, 1903, 125.

28 Evidence of Rev A Fryer, *Native Affairs Commission, 1906-7, Evidence*, 350.

approvingly of her son's desire to fight in the South African war and scolded those "very occasional" people who refused to take up arms.²⁹ An accusation of cowardice was intolerable for a soldier. The 1873 inglorious and chaotic retreat at Bushman's Pass was widely blamed on a Sgt W Clark. Letters to the newspapers made the allegation openly. Clark tried to clear his name in the press, but to no avail. He emigrated saying "As no old soldier can live in a country and be pointed at and branded as a coward, I am leaving Natal" (Pearse et al, 1973, 37).

Durnford was similarly criticized for the Bushman's Nek debacle. He retrieved his honour in death. Charles Barter, his second command on that day, yet one of his sternest critics, commemorated his death at Isandhlawana in 1879.

Durnford was there, the Engineer
A man to those he trusted dear:
As eagle bold, with haughty crest,
Yet with deep feeling, though repress;
Cool and contemptuous in tone,
No counsel pleased him but his own:
Proud of his flag, a soldier born,
He held the Volunteers in scorn

And yet, on Isandhlwana's plain,
Between the slayers and the slain,
At head of a Colonial band
He made a last and des'prate stand.
They fought and died, and, sooth to tell,
With those he scorned the hero fell.
They rest alike in honour's grave:
None can be braver than the brave! (Pearse et al, 1973, 45)

For soldiers, the reality of war went a lot deeper than glory and honour. Combat unleashed emotions and impulses generally held in check. And even the prospect of 'a fight' could provoke anxiety about one's masculinity. On a personal note, in 1975 I was a serviceman in the South African Defence Force. Stationed at Rundu in what was then South West Africa, rumours of war 'up north' set the camp abuzz. Before long there was a call for volunteers to go into Angola, where the SADF was supporting UNITA and FNLA against the newly-installed MPLA government. I can remember clearly now, the debates I conducted with myself: should I volunteer - prove myself a man by killing another, by placing myself at risk, by experiencing front-line combat? Or should I preserve myself, keep myself from danger, stay in the relative safety of the camp? The choice before me was very much about my own masculinity, even though it was a choice also about 'serving my country'. Dilemmas of this kind must have occurred, but evidence is hard to come by. Similarly, there is little evidence of extreme behaviour - battlefield madness - which reportage of modern wars has now revealed to be common. At the turn of the century, excessive behaviour in the service of one's country could not openly be admitted, though it was possible to report a merciless massacre as a feat of military brilliance, glossing over the inhumanity of it all by keeping reportage at a distance. There are some unguarded descriptions of wartime brutality amongst white soldiers which show, unsurprisingly, that conduct in battle was not always by the rule book. At the battle of Khambula in 1879, Major R H Buller was described by his colleagues as "like a tiger drunk with blood" (Laband, 1992, 163). In the battle mounted soldiers pursued and cut down fleeing warriors and killed the wounded where they lay (Emery, 1983, 22-3). Similar sentiments were

29 Killie Campbell Library, KCM 42219, Diary of Charlotte Moor, September 1899, 3, 6.

expressed by Carbineer Harte during the February 1906 sweep towards Ixopo. Harte wrote his mother: We "are quite prepared to entertain 2000 or 3000 black skins to dum-dum bullets if they look for the sensation. Am afraid there is too strong a force here for the liking of any native impi that could be mustered".³⁰ A day later he wrote again about an execution of some rebels. "Yes, Walter's services have been invaluable and the poor chap seemed to be completely done up when we left him on the scene of the execution. I suppose he told you all about it. We shall probably have ceremonies of a similar character to perform, I want to be among the next firing party! I feel very blood thirsty!!"³¹ Finally, with candour and an ability for extraordinary juxtaposition he wrote, "We don't feel the heat so much, there has really only been one hot day since we came out. I hope we are to shoot those niggers that have been caught".³²

But what of soldiers' emotions? What of the trauma? And how did they cope? Masculinity, as this thesis has constantly stressed, is not just about violence and aggression. Carbineer Harte's comments on Walter alert us to the hidden and unacknowledged aspects of warfare. A key context to the playing out of masculinity was the peer group. In chapter 3 we saw how important such groups were, and the role they played in creating and reproducing the gender regimes of schools. Here, I will briefly return to the theme of friendship and investigate its role in the regiments.

The standard kind of friendship was with one's mate - frequently a man who joined at the same time, who had the same rank and who was often somebody who was a family or neighbourhood friend. Such friendships could last a lifetime particularly as regimental associations fostered friendship outside the confines of the regiment itself (Pepper interview, 1994). Jock Phillips, in the New Zealand context calls this mateship. In wartime, Phillips comments that one's mate was "the only consolation for the desolation and daily tragedy" (1987, 179). Yet he and writers like Segal and Morgan are quick to point out that friendship was a complex phenomenon and not what the media liked to portray it as - as purely a cosy and sociable place. On the one hand, armies do "help forge and consolidate certain dominant patterns of masculinity" (for example, excluding the public expression of feelings of tenderness towards a woman) (Segal, 1990, 20). David Morgan observes, on the other hand, that it was not the regiment itself which was creating this masculinity; rather it was that men were "learning to identify masculinity and being male with these (military) traits and pieces of behaviour" (Morgan, cited in Segal, 1990, 20).

Friendship as a micro-institution did not, as a matter of simple reflex, echo back to the regiment its unexpurgated version of masculinity. Friendships were places of misogyny, drunkenness, disrespect, sexual and emotional experimentation and rebellion. Some of this behaviour was officially sanctioned, others not. A perusal, for example, of the NMR regimental orders shows men being disciplined for absence without leave, drunkenness and insubordination.³³ But in times of actual combat, there was much greater latitude with a blind eye being turned to excesses such as stealing, drunkenness, laxness with regard to routine. A member of the NMR described, for example, conduct in the 1906 rebellion: "There were very strict orders against taking cattle, goats, fowls, etc., from the Natives, but every good soldier is a good scrounger, so that there were many tasty and varied meals cooked and eaten under the name of bully beef stew" (Goetzsche, 1977, 123).

30 Natal Carbineer Archive, Pietermaritzburg, Harte to his mother, 16 February 1906.

31 Natal Carbineer Archive, Pietermaritzburg, Harte to his mother, 17 February 1906.

32 Natal Carbineer Archive, Pietermaritzburg, Harte to his mother, 23 February 1906.

33 NMR Archive, Regimental Orders, 1903-1911.

All-male institutions made private friendship difficult. Even if homophobia was not an issue, close friendships between two men were considered exclusionary and inappropriate. There were differences between peacetime and wartime, with the advent of trench warfare at the turn of the century promoting close friendships by dint of changing military geography. During peacetime, friendship was not expected to detract from the team metaphor which shaped regimental life. For men who did not fit into the team, who rocked the boat, grim experience was in store. The record I have consulted is conspicuously silent on the issue of victimization and bullying. In another context, Fussell notes how British soldiers refused "to say anything in their letters home (which) indicates how pervasive the style of British Phlegm became." There was an absolute refusal to talk about grim things - as one observer put it, "Nothing is 'horrible'. That word is never used in public" (Fussell, 1977 181). The silence of the record is testimony to another aspect of masculinity - the requirement that one silently endure. And this was not just an order from officers, this was implicit in the social fabric of regimental life.

Section 6 The Effects of Militarism on Political Life

Mann points out that whereas in the eighteenth century economic and military power preeminently shaped society, in the nineteenth century, political and economic power were more important. During the nineteenth century, the military was specialising to fight wars and was less involved in domestic repression (which was increasingly undertaken by the police and other arms of the civil service). This specialisation produced new careers as well as turning the gaze of the military men to empire and their minds to expansion (Mann, 1993, 410). In Natal, specialisation occurred primarily around the turn of the century and was associated with Britain shifting the economic burden of government to the colony and the colony developing a distinctive identity, a major component of which was an independent, reliable military capacity.

But the Natal experience differed from Europe too. The military was not just an increasingly autonomous war machine. It was the location of elite identity and its constituent parts (the volunteer regiments) still retained a social agenda largely separate from their strict military functions.

What we see in Natal is some evidence of militarist expansionism and bellicosity but much more importantly, the attempt by military men to preserve the regiments as class institutions and to use these regiments and their positions to infuse public discourse with views which reflected gender and class agendas. It is argued, therefore, that as the military became specialised, efforts were made to prevent this specialisation from distancing the military from its influential social location.

There were a great many volunteer officers in Natal's parliament. In 1903, Major George Tatham estimated that "about half of the House" were volunteer officers.³⁴ There was periodic discussion about whether the military should be entirely separate from 'politics'. It was suggested, on the one hand, that volunteer officers be excluded from parliament. The concern amongst military men was to keep their autonomy. Bru-de-wold responded to a question during evidence to the Colonial Defence Commission. "Are you of the opinion that Commanding Officers should sit in Parliament? - I feel very strongly that the proper course with regard to that is to follow the practice at Home, and I am under the impression that that debars members of the active force from sitting in Parliament".³⁵

34 Evidence, Colonial Defence Commission, 1903, 152.

35 Colonial Defence Commission, 1903, 46.

The effect of military men on parliamentary politics would require a study in its own right. For our purposes, we shall briefly illustrate the point with reference to Edward Greene, commanding officer of the for thirteen years (until 1903). Greene was born in 1857 in Pietermaritzburg. His father was James Green, Dean of Pietermaritzburg. He attended Lancing College, became an advocate and farmer (in Nottingham Road). In 1897 he was elected to represent Lion's River in Parliament. Between 1908 and 1910 he was Minister of Railways and Harbours. His military career in the NC spanned twenty six years.

Greene's loyalties were to his regiment first. He became embroiled in an angry exchange with Parliament in 1896 when his offer to send volunteers to Rhodesia was turned down (Stalker, 1912, 269-272). That same year he spoke out strongly against the regiments being subject to government interference. The ministry, he said, should not make decisions about regimental matters. It was wrong, he continued "to make volunteers subject to political considerations - it should rest with the Commandant. ... he would have no ministry telling him that if he behaved himself he would get five years' extension (of service), and that if he did not he must go" (Stalker, 1912, 274-5). Having vigorously defended the autonomy of the military, it fell to Greene to put his views inside parliament a few years later.

Hattersley sums up Greene's career as parliamentarian: "Colonel Greene's influence can be traced not only in the important development of compulsory cadet training but in other steps to maintain the efficiency and add to the prestige of the colonial militia. In particular, with the co-operation of the governor, Sir Matthew Nathan, he initiated the correspondence which issued in the official affiliation of his old regiment with the 6th Dragoon Guards" (Hattersley, 1950, 49-50). Furthermore, after Bambatha, Greene became convinced that Natal could only solve the 'native problem' by becoming part of a greater South Africa and supported negotiations for a federal union.

One did not have to be in parliament to influence politics. Duncan McKenzie's views were always potent and he was not shy in supporting one or other position. McKenzie believed in tribal hierarchy which he felt was synonymous with law and order. He did not let opportunity pass to make this point. In 1906 he supported Chief 'Gileni' of Ixopo who complained "of the power taken away from us. We are not able to impose a fine of more than 40s. We want our powers extended so that we can inflict a fine of a beast so that we may have more power over our people." McKenzie responded, "Tell him I quite agree with that and I will represent it strongly to government. Tell him Mr Foxon, and I think all the Magistrates, agree with him".³⁶

McKenzie was strongly opposed to liberal elements within the Native Affairs Department. He supported magistrates like F E Foxon who took a firm line and opposed R C A Samuelson, an old Hiltonian himself, who preferred working with Africans rather than ruling over them. In 1908 he endorsed the view of Hosking, a stock inspector at Camperdown, about the need to discipline 'insolent' Africans. Hosking bemoaned government indecision: "I quite agree with you Sir: This is a business that should have been dealt with much more firmly: we soon will lose entire control over the Natives: the whole thing has been very gauling (sic) to us".³⁷

While some magistrates asserted their judicial autonomy against militarist pressure to deal harshly with blacks, others found no difficulty in fusing their government office with that of their military affiliation. Both Charles Barter and Frank E Foxon, magistrates of Pietermaritzburg and Ixopo respectively were senior officers in NC. They unashamedly supported strong measures against Africans. Barter came out to Natal with H J Leuchars in

36 SNA 1/1/339, 1906/1220 interview between Col McKenzie and Chief Gileni at Ixopo, 5 March 1906.

37 Local History Museum, Durban, E J B Hosking, Mid Illovo Stock Inspector to McKenzie, 26 December 1908.

1850 and was on good terms with McKenzie. Foxon's father emigrated to Natal in 1854. Frank was lifelong friend of McKenzie. Barter was also Pietermaritzburg Legislative Council member where he put his views on the need to control the African, lamenting at the same time the passing of old tribal discipline. Foxon, a Maritzburg College product, took an implacable dislike for lawlessness and disregard for Africans into his work, supporting the Trewirgie executions in 1906 and passing harsh sentences against Africans routinely in his court.³⁸

All of Natal's governors were closely associated with the military. When they addressed public meetings it was frequently in association with one regiment or another. Official approval for militarist values implicit in these events helped ensure that the military was never out of the public eye and that military men were seldom ignored.

There were a number of reasons for the incessant debate about the capacity of the colonial military in a context where little call was made upon it. These reasons include; imperial insistence on Natal taking responsibility for the military in return for responsible government, international affairs (the Russo-Japanese war of 1905 was seen by many as a harbinger of a generalised war climate), the concern of ONFs to preserve their class interests and their use of the volunteer regiments to achieve this, underlying masculinist social values about hierarchy and order and the actions of the military men themselves.

Military men were able to utilize and even provoke a general fear of Africans, to create a climate of alarmism. An example of this is Duncan McKenzie's claim after the rebellion of 1906 had been crushed that "nearly every native race in South Africa was implicated in what was to be a general rising of blacks against whites".³⁹ This climate was conducive to increasing their importance within settler politics, giving their words weight in matters (such as the route of the railway in southern Natal) apparently devoid of military significance. Yet it was not automatic that their demands would be acceded to. Parliament was cash-strapped and fiscal capacity was put as a constant objection to demands for increased spending.

It is beyond the brief of this chapter to chart the successes and failures of the militarists in their struggle over the colonial budget. Their fortunes were mixed, with the budget increasing dramatically in the years following the granting of responsible government. The budget in 1892 was £66 454 and in 1899 £278 307 (Paterson, 1985, 141). In the early years of the twentieth century, the military budget fluctuated between 9.01% (of total colonial expenditure) in 1902-3 to 12.96% in 1904-5. With the economy in serious difficulty and the Natal government struggling to cover debts incurred in the rebellion, the military budget declined steadily if undramatically up to Union (11.07% in 1909)⁴⁰. In this period, some expense was shifted back on to the volunteers in the active militia leading to a decline in the numbers - from 3335 (1905) to 2580 (1909) (Paterson, 1985, 143).

Military men like Arnott⁴¹ and McKenzie took the number of men in the Mounted Rifles (as the volunteer regiments came to be known) as a measure of the militarist condition of the colony. Arnott believed that town boys were soft or pampered and couched his advocacy of conscription in these terms.⁴² When numbers of Militia declined after the rebellion, McKenzie

38 His son, E B Foxon, followed close in his father's footsteps. Also a MC product and accomplished sportsman, he became magistrate of Eastcourt in the 1930s. A file on his history in his school's archives records with pride that he shot dead 8 African tax defaulters ("without missing a shot") who were part of an impi which attacked him. MC Archive, File "Eddie B Foxon".

39 NC Archive, McKenzie, 1906, 54.

40 Figures calculated from Paterson, 1985, 142-146.

41 Described as "trader, farmer, soldier, politician" and "genuinely popular Natal sportsman" he was held to have, "with no adacittitious aids" risen to "superior circumstances" (Cape Times, 1929, 477).

42 Colonial Defence Commission, 1903, 104-5.

as Commandant of Volunteers put this down to complacency, "lack of interest", "decadence of volunteering spirit" and employers' refusal to employ militiamen. It was for these reasons that he called for a permanent force and conscription.⁴³ But the eyes of the colony were now on the political challenge of Union and his fulminations went unnoticed. In future, military policy would be dictated by Pretoria. The political influence of the local military men was in decline.

Section 7 Sir Duncan McKenzie, ONF Career Soldier

The most prominent soldier of the period was Duncan McKenzie or, as the media liked to style him, Brig-General Sir Duncan McKenzie, CB, KCMG, DSO, VD. He was by no means the only career soldier of his time. George Leuchars of Greytown shared many of his hallmarks. Both came from landed families, both were born into wealth. Leuchars went to Bishops College (which later became Michaelhouse) and McKenzie went to Hilton. As senior officers in the Natal Carbineers and Umvoti Mounted Rifles respectively, they led by example. They kept a distance from the troops, enforcing old notions of officer aristocracy reminiscent of the school prefect hierarchy with which they had been familiar.

Duncan McKenzie was one of five McKenzie brothers. They grew up on a large Nottingham Road farm. Their father, Duncan Senior, was a tenant farmer who came out in 1850 as a Byrne settler. He made money transporting sawn wood to the OFS and bought the farm 'Lion's Bush' near Nottingham Road. He and his sons continued with transport riding - Duncan Junior getting the early nickname 'Gwa Head' (from transport driving days when he told his black assistants to 'Go ahead'" (McKenzie, n/d, 8). His success was attributed in some quarters to "an uncanny control over the raw native mind" (*Cape Times*, 1929, 537).

Duncan Junior began farming in 1881 at 'Maritzdaal' in the Dargle. He married Katherine Agnes McArthur, daughter of one time mayor of Durban Alexander McArthur in 1883. He was a successful farmer, using indentured Indian labour to farm with sheep, cattle, horses and mealies. He was 'progressive' in his methods, being amongst the first to mechanise, fertilize and experiment with new methods of farming (McKenzie, n/d, 26, 34; Pat McKenzie interview, 1994).

Duncan established a gentleman's estate with a huge house built of dressed stone and elaborate out-quarters. His kept exotic animals (Indian spotted deer, Mauritius deer and local varieties), imported a Humber motorcar in 1909 and was the first in the district to get a telephone (c 1914)(McKenzie, n/d, 36).

By the 1890s Duncan Junior was an avid soldier. He had made enough money to leave his farming to his brothers. In 1897 he went north to fight in the Mashonaland risings.⁴⁴ He rose rapidly in the ranks of the Natal Carbineers and was Captain before the outbreak of war in 1899. An excellent polo player, he was renowned for his "dashing" cavalry charges and his ability for "brilliant manoeuvre" (Stalker, 1912, 274). Already by the relief of Ladysmith (1900), Duncan, now a Major, was the darling of the military establishment (McKenzie, n/d,

43 Natal, *Annual Report of the Commandant-General, Natal Colonial Forces for the year 1908* (1909), 1; Paterson, 1985, 127-8.

44 I have been unable to unearth anything on McKenzie's exploits in Rhodesia. Indeed, detail on Natal volunteers (of whom there were about 60 is very hard to come by). The pioneer column which secured 'Rhodesia' for the British South Africa Company in 1890 was made up of fortune seekers, many the sons of South African farmers (Kennedy, 1987, 13). In the 1896/7 Ndebele Shona risings (the first *Chimurenga*), Natal volunteers served with imperial forces. J P S Woods, Estcourt farmer and lieutenant colonel in the NC, first saw action in Rhodesia. Duncan is recorded as having fought in Mashonaland in 1897 while his brother, Peter, had a finger shot off in the war. *Cape Times*, n/d, 522-3; *Cape Times*, 1929, 537; AGO 111/1/8, CS 815/1896; Local History Museum, Durban, File "McKenzie"; Sykes, 1972, 56, 59; Zimbabwe National Archive, Land Settlement Department, S1107, f426, 19 January 1897; Notes from an interview between Nan Slade and Marjory McKenzie (in Nan Slade's possession). Thanks to Bob Challiss, Ian Phimister, Pip Stigger for assistance on this point.

42). He was also developing and expressing strong opinions about the military capacity of the colony. Describing the colonists as "some of the best irregular cavalry in the world" he criticised the failure to mobilize them in the war. "They would have consisted mostly of farmers who understand the Boers ways and would have been equal in every respect to the boers themselves" he said.⁴⁵

From 1903 to 1906 Duncan commanded the NC. In 1906 he was appointed as overall commander of colonial forces mobilized against Bambatha's rebels. By now he had developed a fierce and unyielding reputation. He embarked initially on a reign of terror in the south (towards Ixopo) and then concluded the rebellion with the merciless 'battle' of Mome Gorge in which about 600 African men were killed for the loss of 3 white soldiers.⁴⁶ In the process he acquired a new nickname, "Chaka" (du Plessis, 1975, 96).

In 1907 he was appointed Commandant of the Natal Militia and was knighted for his services to the colony. In the First World war, Duncan commanded a large section of the South African forces in German South West Africa. He was promoted to general during this campaign.

Undoubtedly a hero throughout settler society, Duncan's relationships with his close neighbours were much more problematic. He was often unfriendly, uncooperative and bellicose. In a celebrated 1884 case, Duncan's neighbours contested his arbitrary closing of a road which necessitated a 15 mile detour. Prominent ONFs were involved in the case: W C Shaw, N G Phipson, Charles, Alex and A S Speirs and C A S Yonge. The Lion's River Local Road Board including the Resident Magistrate, J C C Chadwick, George M Sutton, Frederick Bucknall and James King found against Duncan.⁴⁷ Duncan contested the matter further in the Supreme Court in 1885⁴⁸ and then sought damages from the Road Board which was entirely without assets. He had its minute book attached to cover his costs!⁴⁹

And yet if Duncan could be bad-tempered and unneighbourly, there were equally moments when his integrity shone through. In 1917 he joined Smithfield Cold Storage Company as a director. As his son puts it, he "was no business man", being "far too honest and trusting" (McKenzie, n/d 330). When the company overstretched itself, many directors resigned and avoided liability.⁵⁰ But not, Duncan. "[H]e felt that he could not let the shareholders down .. (and) must try to put things right" (McKenzie, n/d, 331). He mortgaged his farms, but the strain told. He had a stroke and died in 1932. His estate was worth a mere £4618.⁵¹

If Duncan's social record was checkered, his reputation in labour matters was less ambiguous. His grand nephew remembers Duncan in terms of a tale about his difficulty in getting labour. Duncan was short of labour so bought a thorn farm, Colenso. All the African occupants moved off the farm out of dislike or fear. Duncan bought another farm but with the same effect. He eventually got his labour by buying land right up to the Thukela river (the border with Zululand and across which the occupants would not migrate) so he eventually got his labour.

45 Local History Museum, Durban, File "McKenzie", handwritten note, n/d.

46 Shula Marks's assessment of McKenzie is seldom contested: "McKenzie had long been prophesying an African uprising; for him the incident which led to martial law represented a 'golden opportunity' to inflict 'the most drastic punishment on all leading natives found guilty of treason', disarming them, and 'instilling a proper respect for the white man'. From the very outset of the disturbances, McKenzie was convinced that only the most drastic punishment would deter the whole African population of Natal from rebelling" (1970, 189).

47 SGO 111/1/53 SG 2875/1884.

48 I/HWK 3/1/2 R155/1885.

49 CSO 1069 1886/857; SGO 111/1/54 SG 150/1886.

50 See CAD, JUS 412, 5/95/25. The Company was liquidated in 1925 with shareholders losing £40 000. Despite allegations of a swindle, the Department of Justice found nothing irregular. See also Morrell, 1986b, 523.

51 Local History Museum, Durban, File "McKenzie", newspaper clipping, no details.

"Whether this story is true or not, I don't know, but it's a nice story" (Pat McKenzie interview, 1994).⁵²

The official record contains many instances of Duncan's cruelty toward his Indian labour. We have these accounts because of the position of Protector of Immigrants. His brief included receiving all complaints surrounding the treatment of indentured labourers. Duncan's treatment of African labour is less clear as the record is largely silent but Patrick McKenzie recounts tales of Duncan using a hayfork first to pinion African labourers to the ground and then thrashing them with a sjambok. There are many references from 1885 to 1913 to Duncan's brutality towards his Indian labourers and it is not the place to record them fully here.⁵³ His record shows that he consistently beat, underfed and brutalized his labour. He left his farm (ostensibly to transport ride) to avoid prosecution but was nevertheless convicted of assault in 1889 and barred from employing Indian labour. He later used his influence with his old Hilton chum (J A Polkinghorne, Protector of Immigrants) to re-establish his ability to employ indentured labour.⁵⁴ This, despite the finding of the previous Protector that the flogging of labourer Muthu "could only have been inflicted by a man of a most violent and ungovernable temper. The poor man could scarcely stand upright".⁵⁵ Furthermore, when again charged with assault in 1903, the magistrate, J W Cross (with Michaelhouse connections), only fined Duncan 10s, even though it was a second offence. The deputy protector noting the lightness of sentence commented that magistrate Cross did not think the assault "very serious"⁵⁶. Duncan had many friends in high places. When in 1913 five Indian labourers deserted in protest at illtreatment, he used the courts to sort out the situation. Firstly, Estcourt Magistrate Foxon (originally of Ixopo and renowned for his lack of sympathy with blacks) was given the case (on the instruction of the Minister of Native Affairs). He absolved McKenzie of any wrongdoing, saying "that he could not believe the Indians." Duncan then used the law against the labourers. Polkinghorne (Protector of Indians) suggested that the labourers should continually be re-sentenced to hard labour until they were willing to return to Duncan's employ.⁵⁷

Duncan McKenzie became a legend even before his death. In 1929 he was described as "a brilliant soldier and strategist, a successful farmer and a true-blue sportsman" (*Cape Times*, 1929, 538). His legacy lives on: roads in Pietermaritzburg and Durban are named after him. Newspapers still recall his past. In 1971, for example, the *Daily News* described Sir Duncan as intrepid transport rider and beloved commander of troops.⁵⁸

Sir Duncan's funeral in April 1932 was marked by eulogies and the assembling of Natal's most famous and important people. Newspapers gave full and convergent accounts of the event. The *Natal Witness's* story was typical. Commenting that 500 people "representative of every portion and class of the Province" attended. "Among them were many of the late general's colleagues and comrades, who spoke in low voices of his courage, his friendship, his integrity. ... On the outskirts were numbers of natives who had also come as a mark of respect".⁵⁹ Amongst the pallbearers was Magistrate Foxon, a Lieutenant Colonel in the NC.

52 There is a lot of truth to the story. In the 1910s, Duncan McKenzie owned 19 243 acres in the area and was trying to buy more. Commenting on these efforts, the Minister of Lands commented: "Sir D. McKenzie owning so much land there does not seem to be any great necessity to enable him to get more." (CAD, LDE-N 397, 3815, Land Board, Natal, notes of meeting 5-6 September 1916)

53 See 1/HWK, 3/1/2, R155/1885; II 1/78, 11276/1887; II 1/78, 1510/1889; AGO 1/8/145, 183A/1913.

54 II 1/78, 1624/1895.

55 II 1/78, 1510/1889, Protector of Immigrants to Colonial Secretary, 8 May 1889.

56 II 1/121, 12060/1903, note from deputy protector, 7 November 1903.

57 AGO 1/8/145, 183A/1913, Attorney General, Natal to Secretary of Justice, Pretoria, 5 December 1913.

58 *Daily News Property Supplement*, 7 May 1971. In the Local History Museum, Durban, File "McKenzie".

59 *Natal Witness* 21 April 1932.

Duncan's chaplain, Rev W Turnbull, gave one of the speeches at the graveside: "Words fail me There was no one more generous, more loyal, more constant in friendship than Duncan McKenzie, and in the great work he did in connection with defence I am sure others can speak more ably than I. I am proud to have associated with them".⁶⁰

A writer for the Natal Mercury wrote, "As a Natal-born British Imperialist, magnificent soldier and courageous, upright man, we, young and old, can only hope to emulate his example. It was an amazing experience when travelling through Rhodesia to hear the widespread genuine admiration of those who had known him during his sojourn there. His capacity for overcoming difficulties was spoken of everywhere; to him these were only obstacles to be brushed away".⁶¹

His NC comrade, Col G Molyneux, gave a military appreciation. "Vivid, valiant and utterly winning in all his ways, Sir Duncan's memory will always be associated in the minds of his comrades with the great cause of Empire that he made his own. This is possibly the memory he would himself have desired. He played a great and splendid part in the history of Natal and his life is a timely reminder to us all that men, not material, gain the day. And, above all else, Sir Duncan McKenzie will be remembered as a true man".⁶²

But not everybody mourned his passing. Before the funeral, so local legend has it, the gravedigger attempted to dig his grave in an obscure part of the cemetery because his memory was not locally esteemed. A swarm of bees put an end to this plan and Sir Duncan was given a more prominent position as supposedly befitted his social and military station (Kimber Interview, 1994)!

CONCLUSION

Commitment to military values united Natal's whites and through the Volunteer Regiments, gave the ONFs an ideal vehicle on which to launch their class and gender values into settler society. Militarism had the effect of uniting white men under a mantle of shared masculinist values. To use Robert Nye's description of the effect of the French honour code, it "helped weaken the social and cultural distinctions that had divided men historically into different social, political, and cultural categories, each with its own codes and criteria of manly comportment" (Nye, 1993, 215).

In the forty years under discussion, the ONFs were able to maintain the regiments, with some moderations, as class institutions. They supplied the commanding and senior officers to the regiments. The regiments and their officers were able by word and deed to infuse colonial life with militarism, a militarism which was necessary for the perpetuation of the military's social and political importance.

During this period, the military became a key institution in which ONF values were propagated and members mingled. A dense network grew up uniting families, regiments, schools and positions of government. Much of this was mutually reinforcing, though not all military men held the same views, not all military men were in favour of naked repression. Despite differences between military men and more broadly amongst ONFs on issues such as the treatment of Africans, there were strong uniting features. In Europe at this time, the elaboration of the state's civilian functions through expanded bureaucracies was depriving

60 Local History Museum, Durban. File "McKenzie", Natal Witness 21 April 1932.

61 Local History Museum, Durban. File "McKenzie", Natal Mercury 22 April 1932.

62 Local History Museum, Durban. File "McKenzie", The Star, 19 April 1932.

elites of ways of exercising power. Increasingly government was mediating between elites and their constituencies. "As more of social life became politicized, parties strengthened more than did elites" (Mann, 1993, 504). In Natal the political party system was chaotic and weak. But this does not give us reason to disagree with Mann's general point. The ONFs had to combat the new state-generated centripetal forces to retain their influence. One of the ways they did this was by ensuring that the regiments did not become state institutions, that the regiments retained their ties and affiliation to the ONFs. This was not altogether possible. The professionalisation of the military internationally left its mark on the regiments but the ONFs responded by producing their own military men, whose links with farming and social lineage were not severed.

The capacity of the ONFs to hold onto the regiments rested primarily on the spectre of subaltern challenge. By creating alarmism, regiments, ONFs and the emerging military men could all claim the need for the military as well as retaining its control. It was an easy matter to bolster white fear of blacks because total control over the indigenous population had never been achieved and a tenuous balance existed, effectively a compromise with pre-existing African forms of governance and orientation.

Bambatha's Rebellion was an ideal opportunity for the military to prove its importance. In the action, it was demonstrated that bureaucratic solutions were not always possible and that the regiments had their place. In the campaign itself, masculinist values were reiterated. These included the military code of honour. And this code, which required that no bad be spoken of honourable men, allowed for the construction of unimpeachable and unflawed heroes like Duncan McKenzie. It was the same discourse which forced subversion and critique into the distant corners of rustic church yards.

Chapter 7 Agricultural Societies, Farmer Associations and the Creation of a 'Farming Community'

Farmers formed organisations to advance their economic interests. These were locally constituted and attempted to bring together all the farmers of a particular area. The organisations facilitated the sale of members' animals and produce, co-ordinated demands and grievances and brought these to the attention of local officials and government. As time went on, AS/FAs became more important for farmers. Apart from changes in the local economy which heightened competition with other sectors, there were challenges which flowed from the new opportunities provided by access to the expanding international market. Farmers were spurred to develop more powerful organisational capacity. Farmer organisations also played a significant social role. Over time they brought together not just the farmers in their particular, geographically confined area, but forged a unified class of farmers across the midlands. The process of integration took a gendered form. The values of settler masculinity which stressed hierarchy, the subordinate place of women and the importance of teamwork were at play in regulating gender relations. The moulding of an agricultural class was achieved through the rhythms established by the organisations themselves. The agricultural societies (ASs) and farmer associations (FAs) held regular meetings and shows, hosted social functions and became highly visible and active in local politics. These were the mechanisms which drew members to the organisation, kept them there and promoted a sense of belonging. The organisations became a focus of local identity, carrying the hopes and aspirations of members. These were basically the same people who had attended the midlands' schools (chapter 3), who played midland sport (chapter 4), who belonged to the midland clubs and societies (chapter 5) and who were members of the midland regiments (chapter 6). The farmer organisations were for whites only, though they differed from the other institutions thus far described in that women were admitted and played a significant role in their activities (see section 6).

This chapter will show how agricultural societies were created, how they developed social cohesion, how they came to forge a 'farming community' and give it a voice, and how in this time, they became institutionalised and vehicles of modernity. In this mode, they combatted individualism and parochialism, and promoted a scientific approach and cooperation with government. Over time, the associations and organisations located themselves within a wider body eventually headed by the Natal Agricultural Union (NAU) which functioned to give farmers a collective identity and a political voice. At the same time, the associations and organisations contained potentially disruptive and individualistic tendencies within the farming community.

Section 1 An Overview of Farmer Organisations in South Africa

In South Africa there were basically three types of farmer organisation. The oldest type was the agricultural show-holding society. Such bodies emerged as early as the 1860s in the Transvaal (Zuid Afrikaanse Republiek) (Naude, 1954). They popularized farming, promoted scientific methods and injected a forward-looking, competitive attitude. The second type of organisation was the FA. At the turn of the century, particularly when depressed economic conditions were sending many farmers to the wall, farmers came together organisationally in order to lobby the

state for support (Murray, 1992, 71-84). Often the leading figures were 'progressive farmers' (well capitalised and market-oriented). Farmer cooperatives were the third type of organisation. These were formed in the early decades of the twentieth century to deal specifically with marketing problems. In time, they provided credit and farm supplies at cost (Morrell, 1986a).

The state was involved in some of the farmer organisations. In the nineteenth century intervention was on a limited scale. Encouragement of farmer initiatives and restricted administrative assistance generally was the extent of involvement. British victory in the South African War fundamentally changed the sub-continent's economy and altered the role of the state in agriculture. The Milner regime initiated a reconstruction programme which promoted commercial farming amongst white farmers (Marks and Trapido, 1979; Keegan, 1986a). In the Transvaal, the state stepped up its involvement. Farmer Associations were encouraged in order to provide representative organisations with which the state could deal. This could also involve attempts to convert farmer disgruntlement into economic endeavour (Power, 1992). It was hoped that FAs would be led by progressive farmers who would encourage their backward colleagues along the road to profit (Morrell, 1983, 272-3). Secondly, the state encouraged the establishment of cooperatives. Here it was even more active, passing laws and establishing a government office to oversee affairs. Cooperatives had large memberships and functioned to provide aid to struggling farmers as well as to rationalise marketing which became increasingly chaotic as South Africa became a part of the international trade system.¹

The state's lack of capacity to assist farmers could explain its early passivity. Natal's midland farmers faced up to this fact by organising their own organisations. Many were in the fortunate position of having already paid for their land, while those who entered farming after land prices had risen often had access to family capital. Nevertheless, they faced some problems which were best solved by collective action (for example, marketing stock), and other problems which only state intervention could solve (for example, problems of inadequate transport and veterinary services). There were racial considerations in the work of the AS/FAs as well. To maintain class power and an identity that was racially exclusive, attention had also to be given to any black challenge. In east Griqualand, for example, where the white farmer population was particularly small, organisation was established in the 1880s to deal with challenges from African landowners/farmers and white merchants (Beinart, 1986, 287). In the midlands, white farmers were in less precarious a position but, as we shall see, they were well exercised on the racial question all the same.

Some of the inspiration for South African developments came from Britain. With the repeal of the Corn Laws and the freeing of the market, the number of farmers, producing independently on relatively small pieces of land, grew rapidly. These were not men of means, nor could they easily access the state. Organisation was a logical response to the situation. Some of the organisations attempted to organise specific constituencies (on the basis of locale or class) whilst others attempted cross-class and national campaigns (Cox, Lowe and Winter, 1991; Fisher, 1978). Some organisations became involved in local politics, directly confronting landlords, while others used parliament to pursue their interests. In general, organisation tended at first to emerge locally in response to crises or dangers of one sort or another. These were not necessarily economic in nature, but invariably were translated into class antagonisms between landlords, tenant-farmers and labourers (Mutch, 1983).

¹ In the production of maize, for example, a surplus was produced which destabilized the local market. The only way of stabilizing the local market was to export at a loss, and cooperatives were the vehicle for this process. In beef production as well, oversupply had a deeply disturbing effect on the industry as a whole (Morrell, 1986b).

In the colonies state intervention was vital for the ultimate success of settler agriculture. In Australia, for example, one of the major reasons for the emergence of farmer organisation in the 1880s was to gain government intervention and assistance (McMichael, 1984). In Natal in the early 1880s, farmers began to demand that government develop a coherent and organised response to the problems of agriculture. A Select Committee chaired by Henry Bluns in 1883 commented that a "general feeling exists ... that ... the question of the agricultural progress of the Colony has not received the amount of attention it deserves from Government and the Legislative Council".² Law 22 of 1883 resulted from the recommendations of the Select Committee. The law made provision for the registration of ASs which implied governmental recognition. State intervention remained limited. Grants given to show-holding societies were increased in 1890 from £100 to £200 (Lambert, 1986, 174) but for the most part farmers continued to make their own arrangements in the area of marketing and labour (see below).

The state did gradually develop a small administrative and scientific capacity. This signalled both the success of organised agriculture's efforts, as well as a growing recognition in the state of the need to commit greater resources to agriculture. In 1893 General C B Lloyd, prominent Mool River farmer and president of the local FA, was appointed the first Commissioner of Agriculture. In 1896 a dairy expert, Ed Challis, was appointed. Together with the principal Veterinary Surgeon, Dr Watkins-Pitchford, they constituted the nucleus of the Agricultural Department. Before 1896 there was no agricultural portfolio in government, and the Treasurer, George Sutton, did the honours. Sutton was a well-known Howick wattle farmer, foundation member of the Howick Farmers Association and president of the Pietermaritzburg Agricultural Society in 1880.³ In 1896 the portfolio was formally created and filled by H D Winter, Estcourt farmer and politician. From then on, the department was steadily enlarged, mainly to increase its capacity to combat agricultural scourges (locusts, stock diseases) and to increase the efficiency of settler production. The concern was to modernise - to use technology and scientific advances to increase yields and quality of produce in order to make an impact on world markets.

Section 2 The Economic Position of Midland Farmers

I have already indicated that the needs and concerns of midland farmers differed from those of upcountry farmers. Access to credit, a major problem elsewhere, did not generally hinder midlanders. Frustrated bank managers bemoaned the fact that farmers provided their own capital and had little need of banking services (Morrell, Padayachee and Vawda, 1993, 189-191). Farmers had a number of available sources of capital. Family money in the metropole was available to many families. The Kimbers and Morphews who bought land in the Dargle in 1882-9 and 1901 respectively, were examples here.⁴ Secondly, via intermarriage and social connection, many farmers lent one another money. Thirdly, within families there was a lot of lending, especially between fathers and sons (Pearse, 1981, 37). Another major complaint in the interior was the role of the 'middleman'. The role of the middleman was a marketing issue - he linked the producer to markets, and took a cut for his services. In the midlands, marketing was generally in the hands of ONF businessmen. Indian businessmen tended to sell agricultural supplies to farmers but were seldom at the forefront of marketing. When they were, they were included on the fringes of that community, treated as honorary members,

2 Natal Legislative Council, First Session, Eleventh Council, Seasonal Papers, 1883, 195.

3 Natal, Report of the Secretary, Minister of Agriculture, For the year ended 30th June 1905, 3.

4 Kimber Interview, 1994; Transcripts of letters from Jeffery Mophew to his father, dated April 1901 to May 1901 (in possession of Mrs Nan Slade, Howick).

rather than as members of a threatening Indian business invasion (Rahman interview, 1992). The marketing of animals did become a problem as volumes increased and farming became more commercial. The practice whereby a tried and trusted local auctioneer took sole responsibility for marketing was diluted as profit margins shrank and farmers became more aware of the need to optimize stock prices. Show-holding societies (ASs), were established to give farmers collective sales's clout by which more profitable arrangements were struck with auctioneers.

It is common in South African historiography to see the issue of farm labour cited as the major concern of white farmers. In the midlands, as elsewhere, there were labour shortages. But farming was overwhelmingly pastoral in the early years and for this, only a small number of reliable, full-time workers (especially for dairy) were needed. For the most part, such labour seems to have been procured, valued and in return, rendered loyal service.⁵ When places like Nottingham Road were initially settled by farmers like John King (1858) there was no African labour available at all (King, n/d, 3). By 1880 three sources of labour had become available: Africans living in homesteads on white farms, Africans living on crown land, unoccupied white-owned land or in Reserves and indentured Indian labour. Most farmers depended on the labour of Africans resident on their land - this generally involved the adult males working for four to six months, plus boys to herd cattle and women for seasonal labour during the harvest. In addition, particularly on farms where arable farming was significant, full-time labour would be procured during harvest-time and planting. This often came from 'thorn farms' (located in areas not too distant, for example near Colenso, Ladysmith, Dundee and Muden) purchased by farmers specifically for labour purposes. Labourers would be drawn from these farms, often without pay, at harvest time. Alternatively, seasonal labour could be drawn from the reserves at a daily or weekly rate. Many of the wealthier farmers (Duncan McKenzie and Joseph Baynes for example), employed Indian labourers.

By the twentieth century, farmers were increasingly paying their labourers in cash. On a minority of large farms, big labour forces were employed full-time. Here, control and surveillance often exercised through the delegated authority of a white farm manager or an African *induna* were a key to efficiency. On most farms the old method of paternalistic control, getting one's hands dirty, continued. Farmers directly supervised labour. Labourers gradually lost the tenant rights they had enjoyed before - the area set aside for their cattle declined and in many instances disappeared altogether; their rights to an arable plot were reduced; rights to firewood were circumscribed. By the 1940s most labour in the midlands was provided by tenants paid in cash, though in the most capitalised areas (Lion's River) 20% of farmers used full-time wage labour (Mazower, 1991, 47-8). On the other hand, it should be noted that farmers continued to provide services such as the provision of transport and the maintenance of a rudimentary schooling facility at a time when, in other areas, labour tenants were being evicted.

Much of the South African agricultural literature stresses that the state's intervention was crucial in assisting 'agriculture' to secure its labour needs (Crush, Jeeves and Yudelman, 1991). Without doubt, where farmers were switching to full-time wage labour and were in competition with other major users of black labour (the Transvaal gold mines, for example), the intervention of the state was important. In moulding labour relations on the farms, once labour supply had been secured, the state was less active. I have argued elsewhere (Morrell, 1996) that labour relations on the farm were ordered along mutually understood lines between farmowner and African homestead head. Such agreement limited friction and sanctioned the

5 In the late 1890s Peter McKenzie left his farm 'Seaforth' in the Polela district to earn some money in Rhodesia. He intended being away for a number of years. He records that he left his farm "in charge of my natives" indicating the levels of trust that existed in some of these relationships (McKenzie 1990, 9-10).

use of violence in particular instances against the young men who, at the instruction of their fathers and under legal obligation in terms of the Masters and Servants Act, did most of the work. While this point is not commonly conceded in South African historiography, in the comparative context of Europe, Mann points out its logic: "Farm workers obtained their wants through farmers, not against them, and so developed and internalized deferential strategies of appeal to them" (Mann, 1993, 695). This point is supported by work on the centrality of the colonial household. Toby Ditz argues that it was the central social, religious, economic and political unit. Virtually everything emanated from or was directed towards the household, because different types of social organisation were either not present, or were subordinate. This phenomenon, she argues, was particularly true of lightly populated, large rural areas. "Even when the centrality of the household began to give way under the impact of commercialization, and as the locus of politics slowly shifted to state and national arenas ... new institutions would at first model themselves after households." This was a world which "put large powers in the hands of heads of households" (Ditz, 1986, 120).

A failure to notice the generational aspect of farm labour relations and to ignore the common problems faced by rural people has caused writers to generalize about violence on the farms and to present it in gender and race-stereotypical ways.⁶ White male farmers were violent towards blacks because it was in their nature so to be when faced with a lack of compliance or obstinate resistance by farm labourers together with pressing economic crisis. In the case of the midlands, Bradford (1986), Burton-Clark (1988, 241) and Mazower (1991) all stress coercion and violence as the major mechanism of labour control. It is argued here that this is misleading, particularly in the period before the onset of full-blown wage labour.

Evidence by midland farmers before the 1906 Native Affairs Commission shows a wide range of preferences concerning farm labour arrangements.⁷ For convenience, these can be divided into two positions. On the one hand, farmers who had been on the land for many years and whose labour arrangements were well-established like Cotton Acutt (Rosetta) and Edwin Peniston (Estcourt) and Robert Speirs (Howick), championed the view that private arrangements agreed upon between farmer and labourer should be retained. Peniston stressed that he "did not think that Government should interfere with private contracts between landlords and tenants." Acutt said that in all his years of farming, he had never had recourse to the Master and Servants Act.⁸ Charles Nicholson, respected elder farmer of Richmond, gave his view that "Natives working for their masters were happier than if they were living at home. As soon as they left the farm, they were filled with the spirit of unrest".⁹ This position stressed the need to bolster the authority of the homestead head, and even suggested that corporal punishment was necessary for this system to work.¹⁰

Farmers who had settled more recently on the land, did not have labour farms and had trouble in attracting labour, were more inclined to demand state intervention.¹¹ Another group of farmers who had labour problems were those who treated their labour harshly, and had extremely authoritarian views about the relationship between labour and employer. Here H D Winter (and Duncan McKenzie (see chapter 5) was a prime example. He believed that

6 A very well-written, but essentialist, account of farmer violence in the OFS context is provided by Murray, 1989.

7 This is a point also made by Slater, 1980, 160.

8 Native Affairs Commission, 1906-7, Evidence, 201, 224.

9 Native Affairs Commission, 1906-7, Evidence, 354.

10 Evidence of John Marwick (Richmond), Native Affairs Commission, 1906-7, Evidence, 335-6.

11 eg. Evidence of John Morton (Nottingham Road), Native Affairs Commission, 1906-7, Evidence, 205. Another reason for demanding greater state intervention was to prop up the authority of the homestead head, the absence of which meant that the farmer could not access the labour of the young males of the homestead (evidence of Henry Cadle and Allan Stuart (Estcourt), 229, 230).

missionaries and farmers who negotiated with Africans and attempted to reach a mutually agreeable settlement with the homestead head, were the source of the problem. They were soft and undermined a more efficient and rigorous system. "You know what natives are. They will make a mountain out of a mole hill. ... Then you get the individual white man who backs the natives up. Those are the people we have to guard against. If these people were not in existence you would not have any trouble with the natives".¹²

It was not always possible for farmers to look beyond their own immediate problems, but William Comrie of Richmond probably summed up a basic realization of midland farmers, and in doing so, giving support for Mann's views above, that "members for country constituencies were bound to consider the interests of all classes of the community, natives included, and in this way he thought natives were sufficiently represented."¹³

For many farmers, the system worked admirably. They attempted to retain the services of loyal and reliable farm workers even when such workers got on the wrong side of the law. In a fascinating 1906-08 case, W H Allwright of 'Glenavon', Bulwer, sought to keep his farmworker, Mehlomakulu, out of jail in order to secure his services. Mehlomakulu (sic) served 6 years for rape and then on release, being unable to repay George Francis, the Ixopo lawyer, the £25 charged for his unsuccessful defence was repeatedly jailed at Francis's instigation for breaching the payment contract. Allwright pleaded for leniency for Mehlomakulu, describing him as "a good servant". Allwright offered to pay some of Mehlomakulu's debts (he owed money "all over the place") in order to keep him out of prison.¹⁴

On Joseph Baynes's estate, his stern, paternal presence aroused admiration, fear and affection from the workers. He rarely had recourse to the colony's laws, preferring to dish out justice himself, fashioning it to suit the offence. An aggressive labourer was instructed to fight a tree with fighting sticks while a drunkard was ordered to drink water for a whole day.¹⁵ While his methods seemed extreme and feudal, they were apparently effective. In 1904 a Natal Witness reporter wrote, "Nel's Rust does not know what it is to have labour trouble with its employees, all of whom are apparently obedient, tractable and hard-working" (Pearse, 1981, 45, 240). Other prominent farmers like Charles Smythe also took the law into their own hands. As Smythe's biographer puts it, "Corporal punishment was the rule in the 1880s, and it was the accepted thing for farmers to assert their authority with the aid of a sjambok" (Child, 1973, 123). Descendants confirm this impression. Barbara Pennefather, granddaughter of H D Winter, says her father and grandfather (who farmed in the Estcourt district) understood 'Zulu culture' and respected its norms. They punished within those norms; beating only boys and young men. Married men were never beaten because of the humiliation. Similarly, girls and women were never hit. H D Winter's Zulu nickname was "Ulfahla", strict but fair (Pennefather interview, 1993).¹⁶

When the state, generally after some prodding by the colonial office, intervened to limit the farmer's authority and power in the highly personalised world of farm labour, farmers were deeply resentful (Lambert, 1986, 101-2). They preferred to deal with things in their own way without interference (and it was the passivity of some magistrates in this regard that was appreciated). It was only once the labourers escaped the closed world of the farm or threatened to disrupt orderly relations that farmers became agitated about the form and implementation

12 Native Affairs Commission, 1906-7, Evidence, 215.

13 Native Affairs Commission, 1906-7, Evidence, 356.

14 I/BLR, 4/1/7, P1029/1907, Allwright to Magistrate Giles, 11 November 1907; Allwright to George Francis, 24 February 1908.

15 Oral Transcripts, Baynesfield Museum.

16 London confirms that in the 1980s, this way of relating to Africans was still the norm in the midlands (1970, Chap 5).

of the law. In these cases, farmers would demand that deserters be returned, that the authority of the homestead head (over wives and sons) be enforced¹⁷, that stock thieves be deported. When Africans attempted to elicit state intervention on their behalves, by for example, laying complaints or legal charges, farmers would attempt to subvert the law or have it changed to extend their powers.¹⁸

The relationship of farmers to legislation should not be simplified. Orthodox Marxist argument would have it that the law is simply a reflection of ruling class interests. While few would accept such a crude analysis nowadays, it is not fully appreciated what a dual-edged weapon the law was. Prominent farmers were not exempt from the law and it touched their lives in many places. While they might use it against recalcitrant labour tenants or debtors, they could equally fall foul of it. Trevor Tatham, one of the many prominent Tathams in the midlands, farmed at Rosetta. In 1925 he was fined £1 on to counts of contravening Road Traffic Ordinances 11 of 1913 and 8 of 1921.¹⁹ The Mool River criminal record book shows that members of other ONFs were arraigned too: Lund, McKenzie, Simmons and Ballantyne all found themselves before the magistrate in this period. Farmers did not just laugh these appearances and small fines off. They were considered a nuisance and a slight. In 1913 Duncan McKenzie, perhaps the most volatile of farmers, was fined £25 for moving cattle in defiance of the Cattle Diseases Act (for which farmers had powerfully pushed). He wrote to the Minister of Agriculture to protest the fine and demand intervention. "You can hardly expect me to be satisfied, & surely I have every right to look to the Minister to put a wrong right".²⁰ It is not surprising therefore, that when AS/FAs applied for "a complete set of the Laws of the Colony" it was not so much for the purpose of using the laws against Africans tenants as to permit the AS/FA "more efficiently (to) protect the interests of members" (Wood, 1947, 25).

The extension of the state into farming specifically, and civil society generally, also received a mixed reception. In 1908, the Income and Land Assessment Act, No 33 of 1908 was passed. It increased the farmers' tax liability. Up until this time, farmers had paid a minimal tax on land. The new tax made them liable for additional payments to the state which in many districts amounted to an increase of between 50 and 100%.²¹

Section 3 The Establishment of Farmer Organisations

The first agricultural society formed in Natal was the Pietermaritzburg Agricultural Society in 1851 (Gordon, 1984). Its founders were not prominent farmers for such did not yet exist in Natal. They were, however, the Colony's elite. Amongst them were Lieutenant Governor Pine and Thomas Fannin. Fannin had been a wealthy shipbuilder in Liverpool before emigrating to the Cape. He lost money searching for copper in Namaqualand but then had the good fortune to buy a 6000 acre farm outside Pietermaritzburg for a mere £150 in 1847 (Juul, 1982, 27). In the first decade, only one president (Charles Barter) could claim to be a farmer. Barter, despite

17 The current work of Benedict Carton on the period around the turn of the century and Ben Mazower (1991, 61) on the 1940s shows that the authority of the homestead head was constantly challenged by young men and women.

18 The power of the African cultivators/farm workers to influence his conditions of work is generally acknowledged. Africans were rarely, if ever, powerless. In the OFS, in the era of sharecropping, they successfully used their agricultural skills (even after the passing of the 1913 Land Act) and productive capacity to bargain for better conditions (Keegan, 1988). In the midlands, sharecropping did not exist and there were fewer possibilities of migration. Yet this was an incentive to deal with white farmers who were short of labour and to build up an uneven, but not absolutely powerless working arrangement.

19 I/MRV, Volume 1, Combined Criminal Record Book and Case and Fines Book, 1923-1925, 217. The earlier records are missing.

20 CAD, JUS 179, 4/251/13, McKenzie to Roos, 31 May 1913.

21 Sessional Papers, 5th Session of 5th Parliament, 1909, LA No 6 of 1909, 34.

owning a number of farms, was gentleman farmer. His main interest was breeding and racing thoroughbreds and involving himself in the cultural and political life of the colony.²² The show was therefore, designed amongst other things to promote the Colony via agriculture, rather than to promote agriculture for its own sake, or to promote the interests of farmers. It had a social aspect to: the show was to be the hub of Maritzburg's social and commercial life during its run.

In 1854 Greytown established the colony's second (the Umvoti) AS. Greytown was a well-established agricultural district and its show soon rivalled that of Pietermaritzburg. For the next three decades there was little further organisation in the midlands (though Klip River and Weenen established Agricultural societies). From 1882, however, the accelerating tempo of the rural economy and the influx of farmers, resulted in steady expansion.

- 1882 Richmond Agricultural Society
- 1884 Howick Farmers Association
- 1887 Nottingham Road Farmers Association
- 1891 Polela Agricultural Society
- 1893 Underberg Agricultural Society
- 1899 Dronkviel Agricultural Society
- 1903 Himeville Agricultural Society (which became the Himeville FA in 1919)
- 1905 Donnybrook Farmers Association
- 1911 Impendhle Agricultural Society
- 1917 Highflats Farmers Association.²³

Each of these organisations was started either by a prominent local or a group of the district's foremost farmers. In each case it was the prominent farmers who took office, dominated the committee and set the agendas. Let us take the Richmond AS as an example. The RAS was established by James Schofield, local farmer and on a number of occasions MLA for the district. He was a close friend of Joseph Baynes and together with another MLA, S J Marwick, was elected the first patron. The first president was A C Hawkins, the local magistrate. This was a common feature of FAs and ASs, though in some the magistrate was ex officio a member, rather than elected president.²⁴ In due course Joseph Baynes, Peter Flett, Henry Nicholson, J C Nicholson, J W McKenzie and John Marwick became presidents (Coulson, 1986, 313). The committees included virtually all the oldest and wealthiest farming families of the district. In a 1918 photograph of 78 members of the RAS, well over half can be identified as coming from the most prominent (and numerous!) families.

Nicholson	8
Marwick	11
McKenzie	6
Cockburn	3
Comrie	4

22 The large distance between the PAS and its supposed agricultural constituency is also borne out by the choice of secretaries: Robert Finemore, prominent civil servant and leader of Natal's freemasons, was honorary secretary in 1879-1880.

23 There is no consolidated list of midlands' agricultural societies and farmers associations, nor of their dates of formation. Furthermore, their records are scattered far and wide, and many have been lost. For example, the Polela Agricultural Societies minutes have been 'lost' while the early records of the Umvoti Agricultural Society were totally destroyed in a calamitous fire in 1914. The Killie Campbell library has a good collection, but many associations/societies still keep their own records: The Nottingham Road and Underberg societies fall into this category, though the NRFA's early history is sketched in Wood (1947). The Ikopo FA also has some records, but I have not been able to track these down. By fortunate accident, I found the minutes of the Impendhle Agricultural Society, in the possession of the district's amateur historian, Ann Black. In many instances I have had to glean information about associations and societies from local or private publications (eg Creighton Women's Institute).

24 The constitution of the Impendhle Division Farmers Association actually provided for the local magistrate to be ex officio honorary president. (Impendhle Division Farmers Association Minute Book, 3 (In possession of Mrs Ann Black, Elandsheek Farm, Boston).

Hackland	2
Shepstone	1
Payn	2 ²⁵
Mapstone	5
D Adamson (Local Magistrate)	

(Coulson, 1986, 311)

Once an AS/FA had been established one of its first missions was to build an agricultural hall. These became the centres of community life in most midland villages. In addition, all the ASs concentrated on holding stock sales and later, hosting agricultural shows. In the case of the HFA, the task of holding shows proved too onerous so it established the Lions River and Division Agricultural Society (LRDAS) in 1882 to discharge this task, leaving the HFA to concentrate on matters of local politics. For most AS/FAs these were the major activities. Another area which became increasingly important, especially after the Farmers Congress had been established in 1891 by T K Murray, was sending delegates to its conferences and discussing motions to be put there.²⁶

As regionalism within the midlands broke down and Natal's provincialism was eroded by economic and political forces which were integrating the sub-continent, farmer organisations found themselves drawn into an energy-sapping and time-consuming web of bureaucracy and politics. Agricultural societies no longer just organised shows and sales. As government increased its involvement in agriculture the volume of correspondence increased dramatically. Secretaries in some organisations found it impossible to keep up and resigned. In 1919, the long serving secretary of the UAS, C A Huber resigned, stating that the remuneration by the society could no longer compensate for lost time and burdensome work load. In the same year, George Blackmore, the desperate secretary of the Donnybrook FA noted that whereas in 1917-18 he had written 66 letters, in 1918-19 he had written 262.²⁷ Farmers were now more aware of markets and agricultural competition, which necessitated developing a more coherent political lobby and greater organisational efficiency. With these developments, local agricultural shows were gradually phased out and farmers focussed on the premier show, Pietermaritzburg's Royal Show. In effect, over the forty years discussed in this chapter, the functions of farmer organisations changed. Many still held stock sales and thus maintained their marketing function, but the bulk of the effort now went into creating a farmers' voice.²⁸ This meant that the distinction between ASs and FAs all but disappeared and some changed their names from AS to FA.

AS/FAs were drawn into a much closer relationship with government and came to reap the benefits of this. In terms of Act 35 of 1904 (Agricultural Development Act) farmer organisations were granted government land for their shows and sales and could use this land to gain government funding.²⁹

25 Philip Francis Payn (1853-1916) farmed in Richmond. He was born in Jersey, Channel Islands, and emigrated in 1856 with his parents. In 1902 he represented Pietermaritzburg County in parliament.

26 Murray, as President of the Pietermaritzburg Agricultural Society, called a Farmers' Conference in 1891. All agricultural societies were invited to attend. Nine affiliated. In 1905 the Farmers' Conference was converted into the Natal Agricultural Union.

27 KCM 33659, Umvoti AS, minutes of annual general meeting, 25 October 1919; KCM 43085, Donnybrook FA, minutes of annual general meeting, 14 September 1919.

28 The transformation of farmer organisations in the United Kingdom occurred at about the same time. Whereas in the 1880s agricultural interests were characterised by "division and weakness" by the 1910s a powerful national body had emerged to represent agricultural interests (Cox, Lowe and Winter, 1991, 33, 35).

29 CAD, URU, 451, 1463; URU 465, 2416.

The transformation of the AS/FAs was reflected not just at the levels of function, title, scale and political profile. At inception, many of the ASs had been elitist. They had been similar to the farmers' clubs which prominent farmers had organised. Bearing a close resemblance in conception to the Victoria club, the Pietermaritzburg Farmers' club (1867-1874), for example, aimed "to maintain a reading room with agricultural literature and provide a discussion venue for farmers" (Gordon, 1984, 26). In the remote and insular community of Highflats near Ixopo a similar club was started in 1901 by William (later General, Sir) Arnott. It operated until 1915 and then was replaced by the Highflats Farmers Association, of which Arnott was president as well (Woodley, 1984, 17).

Although this chapter deals with AS/FAs, it is necessary briefly to review the history of the region's cooperatives. There were few cooperatives and their memberships were small. Buying cooperatives were designed to help cash-strapped members avoid bankruptcy by obtaining supplies cheaply and providing limited credit facilities. Marketing cooperatives brought together small numbers of farmers whose aim was to market or process a specific crop or product. Neither venture served, as they did in the Transvaal, to keep borderline farmers from bankruptcy.³⁰

One of the first cooperatives formed in Natal was the Pietermaritzburg Cooperative Society (in 1892). Its major object was "to carry on the business of storekeepers, either wholesale or retail, under a co-operative system".³¹ A few farmers were members but its prime constituency was urban and its business was not directed at agriculture. It was unsurprising that Weenen, a town of white smallholders, established the Weenen Cooperative Trading Society.³² An altogether different type of cooperative was established in 1902 in the wattle industry. Difficulties of marketing led William Deane, an Umvoti farmer and later Minister of Agriculture, to found the Natal Farmers' Co-operative Association for the sale of bark (Guest, 1989, 319). In Weenen, a similar marketing venture was launched by small-scale lucerne growers in 1915 (Weenen, 1929, 7). The essential point to be grasped here, however, is that cooperatives operated with limited effect in the midlands. Despite government attempts to promote cooperatives in the early years of the twentieth century, they remained unpopular.³³ Apart from the regional reasons already indicated, perhaps the words of Joseph Baynes best explain their limited utility and appeal. As the colony's pre-eminent farmer he opposed cooperatives for his whole life, describing them as "simply limited liability companies which do little, if anything, for the farmer beyond limiting their dividends and paying a bonus" (Pearse, 1981, 222). What he preferred was to invest his own capital in companies owned and directed by prominent farmers. Perhaps the best known example of this course of action was when he launched the Nel's Rust Bacon Factory in 1907 after farmers had failed to achieve the same goal by creating a cooperative (Pearse, 1981, 220).

30 In a rare case, members of LRDAS formed "the Howick Credit Society to help their fellow farmers who were in financial difficulties". The society operated in the depression years of the 1830s but I have no knowledge of its operations (Sootney and Scott-Shaw, 1984, 38).

31 A1292, 1/1/1/1. Regulations of the Pietermaritzburg Cooperative Society (reprinted 10 May 1929).

32 CNC 376, 1919/3045.

33 Challis, the government dairy expert, for example, believed that dairy output would be doubled if farmers abandoned stubborn individualism and embraced cooperation (Natal, Agriculture Department, *Annual Report for 1902*, 137).

Section 4 Membership of Farmer Organisations

The membership of AS/FAs had a number of features:

- i. It changed over the period from comprising mainly of the local gentry - whom Duminy and Guest describe as "smug, well-to-do farmers" (1989, 367) - to include a much wider spectrum of farmers. This in fact reflected changing demography - initially areas were lightly settled and most farmers were on large, extensively farmed lands. In the twentieth century farm sizes dropped and rural white population rose.
- ii. Membership and office continued to be dominated by the old, well-established and prosperous farming families. In the HFA, for example, prominent local families (Sutton, Mackenzie, Campbell, Hyslop, Sinclair) were represented on its committees throughout the first century of its existence (Scotney and Scott-Shaw, 1984, 16).³
- iii. Membership was not confined to farmers: some AS/FAs included local professionals (eg doctors) and businessmen. A few FAs encouraged the membership of women and juniors, often catering for families with a long association with the FA.
- iv. A quite astounding number of AS/FA office-holders were members of government or members of Parliament.³

As agriculture changed, so members came to view the AS/FAs differently. Agriculture became more intensive and it was no longer possible for farmers to continue as before. As a shift, especially in the early twentieth century, from pastoral to arable and mixed farming occurred, manures and fertilizers became vital. Growing crops (including timber) meant that the threat of fire had to be combated more seriously. Experiments were conducted on different seeds and livestock types. The farmers who had been longest on the land led in introducing innovations and upgrading their operations. They encouraged collective approaches to problems such as burning firebreaks and innoculating against stock diseases. They also turned to government for technical assistance and advice, while the smaller farmers followed their lead, using the FAs to obtain fertilizers cheaply and to gain access to touring agricultural experts as well.³⁶

The ONF leadership of the FAs followed a dual, and at times, paradoxical, policy. On the one hand, they used the FAs to organise the farmers into a community. On the other, FAs disciplined rogue elements. Farmers who ignored laws and showed little good neighbourliness (for example, by allowing sheep scab to spread, by allowing weeds to infest their lands or by harbouring stock thieves) could bring disaster to a large area. These actions threatened to fragment community, giving rise to division and acrimony. Another aspect of creating farmer community was to give it a voice. Identification with the resolutions and public statements of AS/FAs was an important way of consolidating the feeling of belonging. On the other hand, ONF leaders, could find themselves at odds with members when they attempted to present their own agricultural views as FA policy. Attempts to modernise farming and get the government to adopt liberal labour policy, for example, often evoked opposition from members whose economic positions were less secure and who needed more state intervention to procure labour. They did not have the capital necessary to diversify their crops or erect fences or take a range of preventative measures to combat disease.

34 Mazower (1991, 37-8) maintains that this was still the case in the 1940s.

35 To mention a few, the Umvoti AS included W A Deane and George Leuchars (Ministers of Agriculture and Native Affairs respectively); HFA had Thomas Watt, Thomas Hyslop and George Sutton; NRFA boasted Charles Smythe. Weenen Agricultural Society had H D Winter and John Moor; RAS boasted Joseph Baynes; Klip River, T K Murray.

36 In 1901, for example, the Moot River FA cooperated with the Howick FA to import bone dust fertilizer at a cheap rate for members. (KCM 24435, Moot River FA, minutes of special general meeting, 2 March 1901.)

By the turn of the century it had become imperative to act and speak collectively. Only farmers with the resources of Joseph Baynes could afford to steer an individualistic course. Whereas ONFs had the ability to convert investment (land) into capital in the nineteenth century, by the twentieth century few had large tracts to so convert. Their needs for a different scale of capital now meant that they were less self-sufficient and even family resources were insufficient for the scale of operations now undertaken.³⁷ An example of the changing economic climate and its impact can be seen in the fate of Henry Nicholson's attempt to start a canning factory in Richmond. He was a farmer but specialised in processing and selling dairy products. In 1889 he was receiving 1000 lbs of butter a week for delivery to Johannesburg and elsewhere. In that same year he launched his factory with local shareholders including his wife and J W McKenzie. The venture failed and was liquidated in 1908 (Coulson, 1986, 53-4). Family money could also be over-extended as a result of marriage and the concomitant need to set up each son: Charles Smythe, left 12 children. He provided for each of them, every son getting a farm, except Oswald, a lawyer, who received two urban plots.³⁸ He also lent them money to make their farms a working proposition. This in itself was a huge achievement, but in addition, Smythe was uncle to J G (Jim) Speirs, founder member of the Impendhle FA. Speirs, son of a Byrne settler, borrowed much from Smythe, establishing a farm of 1800 acres and a saw mill. In the process, however, he reduced Smythe's own ability to fund his sons and his own operations to their fullest extent (Speirs, 1985, 93-4).

Government thus became more important as it intruded ever more expansively into agriculture. The strength of family and other social networks, which had often extended into government itself, were no longer secure ways of accessing the state. The way to harness state power was to be organised. As confirmation of this change, the membership numbers of AS/FAs rose throughout the period, with parents telling children that when they became farmers it would be essential that they join the local FA (Paterson interview, 1992).

Section 5 Economic Functions

The *raison d'être* of agricultural societies was to hold stock sales. As Nottingham Road's James King (founder member of the LRDAS in 1884) said, "The worst drawback was the lack of markets" (Scotney and Scott-Shaw, 1984, 1). In Mool River, the absence of markets was given as the reason for the district's lack of diversification and the limited range of crops produced.³⁹ Their function was thus primarily marketing and their fortunes were generally judged by the success or failure of sales.

The sale of stock differs markedly from that of maize (the product which sparked the cooperative movement in the Transvaal). In Natal, the market was very localised with local butchers and auctioneers generally dealing with farmers in their area. I do not have information on relations between auctioneers and farmers, but the ONF ties existed across this divide as well. The major midland auctioneers were Raw and Co. The Raws were early settlers and their numerous descendants had a presence throughout Natal and Zululand. Some were farmers (Underberg, Eastwolds, Alfred County), others businessmen.⁴⁰ They were married into

37 An example of the change in scale, orientation and sophistication of farming is provided by William Nicholson of Richmond. His farm, 'Thedden', was described by a *Natal Mercury* journalist in 1889 as "endless fields of verdant, cultivated spots" while all of the family's farms were extensively irrigated and fertilized and in the process of becoming mechanized (Lambert, 1986, 181). Ten years later, it was not just the farms of a few leading farmers which were in this stage of transition.

38 MSCE 2645/1918 Estate of Charles John Smythe; Smythe interview, 1992.

39 KCM 24435, Mool River FA, minutes of a sub-committee meeting, 30 July 1896.

40 MSCE 11/12, Estate of Reginald Raw.

many prominent ONFs, for example the Ottos. The relationship between auctioneers and agricultural societies were varied but tended to be quite cordial. In 1906 or 1907, in a situation that bordered on nepotism, Raw and Co got the contract to conduct the sales of the Donnybrook FA despite competition from the Holliday Brothers. At least two Raws were prominent in the Association!⁴¹ In the case of the Richmond AS, the auctioneers Collier and Forsyth of Pietermaritzburg had a long-standing and strong relationship. At a meeting of the RAS the secretary noted that "a great deal of the success attending our sales is due to them. They have assisted me in every possible way and nothing is too big or too small for them to undertake".⁴² What AS sales allowed was for farmers to rationalize their sales, obtaining better prices because of the large number of animals for sale and the larger number of buyers who arrived. Costs were also cut to the minimum because the sales were held locally and either the AS or the auctioneer would pay for the transport and other associated costs of the sale. ASs thus kept farmers closely in touch with the marketing of their products in a way that maize cooperatives were never able to do.

A variety of factors increased the importance of cattle sales particularly in the late and early twentieth century. Catastrophic cattle diseases, particularly Rinderpest (1897-8) and East Coast Fever (1907-10) reduced herds dramatically making it all the more important for farmers to realise the best prices available for surviving stock. The number of cattle in Natal was reduced from 280 000 in 1896 to 150 000 in 1898 (Pearse, 1981, 83). This amounted to a loss of £863 700 to white farmers (Camp, 1986, 50).

It was only in the area of stock sales (sheep, cattle and to a lesser extent horses) that cooperative marketing operated.⁴³ Foreign imports began to undercut local products, particularly once the railway system was developed. In 1905, on behalf of the Ixopo Farmer Association, Magistrate F E Foxon objected to government allowing imported grain.⁴⁴ In other domains (such as dairy and ham products), cooperative companies were formed. These were joint stock companies, generally headed by prominent and prosperous local farmers (John Moor⁴⁵ and George Richards⁴⁶ of Estcourt, for example), who raised capital from farmer share-holders. The members of the Board were generally the major share-holders (Tarr, 1991?, 39). Farmers who joined were then obliged to supply the factory/dairy with produce, in return for which they got a guaranteed price and, if available, a dividend.

The small size of the local market put pressure on farmers to export. The capacity of Natal's manufacturing industries was minuscule. It began to expand around 1910 yet by 1914 there were no more than 500 enterprises in the whole colony (Guest, 1989, 358). Interestingly, a reason not cited for the increased concern about marketing was competition from Africans. There was a vigorous trade between white and black farmers in livestock, but this was not considered deleterious.⁴⁷ It was for access to the urban and metropolitan markets that farmers struggled.

41 KCM 43085, Donnybrook Farmers Association Minutes, committee meeting at Donnybrook Hotel, 17 November 1908. A similar situation existed in the NRFA, where the auctioners were Raw and Co, and brother/cousin was a leading member (Wood, 1947, 7-8).

42 KCM 33647, Richmond Agricultural Society 1917-1938, minutes of meeting, 1 April 1920.

43 In Australia similar developments occurred: "In the rural economy, farmers began to form cooperatives, or unions, to lobby for greater control over the circulation sphere (in such matters as lowering railway freight costs, enhancing marketing, and obtaining greater financial assistance in the face of the bank's traditional pastoral bias). They also demanded a more scientific approach to agriculture" (McMichael, 1984, 227).

44 *The Agricultural Journal*, VIII, 3, 24 March 1905, 287.

45 Moor was chair of the Natal Cooperative Creamery (1902-1907), chair of the Farmers' Cooperative Bacon Factory (1917-1933) and Director of Federated Farmers Cooperative Company and Overseas Cooperative Selling Agency.

46 George Robert Richards (1865-1951) served with the NC in the South African war. In 1901 he was elected for Weenen County. In 1924 he was elected as a SAP representative for the same constituency.

47 The local African market was considered a godsend: Donnybrook farmers sold their horses to Pondoland Africans when other markets dried up. (KCM 43085, Donnybrook FA, minutes of annual general meeting, 2 September 1916.)

When ASs became FAs, most of them did not cease their marketing labours. As indicated above they took on other functions, becoming an extension of the burgeoning colonial bureaucracy. For example, it became routine for them to be asked to provide evidence to government commissions.⁴⁸ Much of the literature on white agriculture stresses that labour supply was a major obstacle to production. In sections 2, I have already taken issue with this view, but here, with specific reference to organised agriculture further attention will be given to an examination of labour relations.

Labour supply was not amongst the major concerns of any of the FAs until the late 1910s and 1920s. This is, on the face of things, surprising. Throughout the midlands labour was difficult to obtain, especially in 1880s. Many farmers hired Indian labour because African labour was not forthcoming. The issue of labour was important but it was not just the supply that was at stake. Control was often a greater concern. Labour issues were tackled in two ways. As indicated in section 2, by far the most popular was direct control - negotiating relationships with farm tenants. This preference rested increasingly on the buttress of the law, particularly the Master and Servants Act. As early as 1895 the MRFA was opposing any prospect of Africans being able to escape the private world of the farm.⁴⁹ And again, in 1912, the same issue evoke similar sentiments. P D Simmons, a well-established, prize-winning member of the association proposed that "contracts made by the Head of a Kraal acting as a parent or a guardian of a minor, where service is given in lieu of rent, shall be regarded as binding and valid and treated accordingly in the Courts".⁵⁰

There was another threat to the ties that bound white farmer to African labour tenant. From the 1890s onward, mine labour recruiters in the Transvaal looked enviously at the untapped labour resources of Natal. They negotiated with the colonial government for the right to recruit Africans. In 1895 it decided to regularize the situation by appointing a 'native labour agent' in Johannesburg. This was viewed with alarm by farmers who considered it a harbinger of full-scale recruiting in the colony. The Mool River FA "emphatically" protested the action, supporting their concern with two arguments: the move was "repugnant to the Farming Interests in Natal" and "fraught with the greatest responsibilities towards the Natives themselves by encouraging them to leave the Colony for a country where many of them will become morally and physically weakened".⁵¹ The issue remained a sensitive one, with Donnybrook and Umvoti protesting touting whenever the spectre occurred (in 1908 and 1915).⁵²

While labour became an increasingly important and potentially divisive issue, there were issues on which farmers were absolutely unanimous. A grievance with long history was stocktheft. Here the farmer was unable to exercise his direct power over Africans resident on his farm, as these were rarely the culprits. Invariably theft was blamed upon (and generally perpetrated by) Africans living on crown land or unoccupied white-owned land. In the early days, military solutions had been used to solve stocktheft by 'Bushmen'. But by the 1880s 'Bushmen' raids had ended and the origin of the problem was closer at hand. Neighbouring crown and land company lands were filling with African residents who were not under the control and surveillance of white landowners. Such people, according to white farmers, were prime suspects in any stocktheft. In 1889 the Howick FA created a special fund to reward native

48 KCM 33647, Richmond AS, minutes of annual general meeting, 27 January 1925.

49 KCM 24435, Mool River FA, general meeting at Granteigh hotel, 12 December 1895.

50 KCM 24436, Mool River FA, minutes of annual general meeting, 25 October 1912.

51 KCM 24435, Mool River FA, minutes of general meeting, 12 December 1895.

52 KCM 43085, Donnybrook FA, minutes of general meeting, 7 March 1908; KCM 33659, Umvoti AS, minutes of annual general meeting, 30 January 1915.

informers about stock theft (Scotney and Scott-Shaw, 1984, 13). In general, however, farmers turned to AS/FAs to call for harsher punishment including deportation and whipping.⁵³

Magistrates assisted farmers by evicting stockthieves. On occasion, they notified the local FA about an offender and asking it to apply for an eviction to a different district.⁵⁴ Shortly after Union there were fears amongst farmers that this handy expedient would be terminated. The Impendhle District FA consequently endorsed a motion put to the NAU that the old practice be continued.⁵⁵

Another issue which evoked heated response was attack on white farmers. In 1919, farmers became worried that stock dip would be used to poison animals and farmers alike. The changes in the countryside in the early twentieth century had included higher levels of eviction and heavier financial exactions by the state upon Africans. Africans often took revenge for eviction or illtreatment. The Donnybrook FA reported, for example, that "some fiend" had poisoned a local farmer's entire Friesland herd. AS/FAs called for arsenite of soda (the stock dip) to be given a particular colourant and to be distributed more carefully. There was little more that they could do.⁵⁶

From the turn of the century a number of developments made labour a more sensitive issue. There was a switch from pastoral to arable/mixed farming and more farmers began operating in the midlands. The spread of wattle farming which was labour intensive added to a perceived labour shortage. In 1902 the Lion's River magistrate observed that "Native labour has been almost unobtainable, except by those who are fortunate enough to have Native tenants on their farms".⁵⁷ Those 'fortunate' to have labour tenants were the well-established ONFs. It was the newly arrived farmers that felt the labour shortage most acutely, although the transition to more intensive production by established farmers even caused them labour shortages at peak moments in the agricultural cycle.

But it also has to be acknowledged that labour shortage was not absolute. Shortages occurred from time to time and from district to district, depending on circumstances. For example, immediately after the South African war labour was difficult to procure. Tax collection was inefficient and the turmoil of the war led Africans to resist demands for wage labour (Krikler, 1993). A drought and the gradual waning of hopes for liberation caused an upsurge in labour availability. In 1903 the magistrate of Upper Umkomanzi reported that native labour was "more easily obtained than it has been for the last two or three years".⁵⁸

In 1912 the Mool River FA president commented, "The labour for carrying on farming operations is becoming scarcer, more difficult to obtain and dearer, Indian labour having been abolished the Union government have as yet taken no steps to replace it in any way. We must hope definite action will soon be taken in the matter".⁵⁹ Farmers were no longer able to solve problems personally or even locally. Economic and political changes (in the latter case, Union

53 KCM 24435, Mool River FA, minutes of special general meetings 16 August 1903, 29 August 1903; KCM 33659, Umvoti Agricultural Society, minutes of annual general meeting, 30 January 1915.

54 This practice was particularly widespread before Union in terms of Section 37 of the Native Law Code which was amended by Act 47 of 1903. See SNA 1/1/325, 1905/2281 and SNA 1/1/380, 1907/2961.

55 Impendhle Division FA minutes of annual general meeting, 8 September 1911, 17.

56 KCM 33659, Umvoti AS, minutes of special general meeting, 22 March 1919; KCM 43085, Donnybrook FA, minutes of annual general meeting, 23 September 1920.

57 Natal, Agriculture Department, *Annual Report for 1902*, (1903), 3.

58 Natal, *Magistral Reports, 1903* (1904), 12.

59 KCM 24436, Mool River FA, minutes of annual general meeting, 25 October 1912.

transformed the bureaucracy, making it less amenable to private access) demanded collective action. The problem was that farmers were experiencing the economic changes differently. While some wanted to continue to use Indian labour, others did not. While some wanted to retain the small, stable labour tenant population, others wanted it scrapped.⁶⁰ The NAU put 'agriculture's position to government, but this was not a position which everybody agreed with. The fact that, in the face of many different economic demands by members, the AS/FAs held together is the concern of the next section.

Farmers seldom, if ever, got immediate relief from the AS/FA or the NAU or government. Policy took a long time to formulate and enact. Farmers, therefore, continued to seek solutions by acting individually. This involved dealing with tenants and state officials. Three examples below demonstrate the different outcomes of such a strategy.

In 1904, H Lang of Rosetta entered into a verbal agreement with 'Mbomvu' to work on his farm. He realised that such an agreement was shaky because 'Mbomvu' was under order of eviction from the district under the Native Administration Law 44 of 1887.⁶¹ Try as he might, Lang could not get the state to lift the eviction order. Lang protested: "I cannot trace any wrong he has done himself", but to no avail. The Under Secretary for Native Affairs informed Lang that "permission for Mbomvu to reside on your farm in the Estcourt Division cannot be granted".⁶²

Where a farmer could not reach agreement directly with neighbouring Africans, he might invoke the state or seek its involvement to resolve a problem. Arthur Woodgate farmed at 'Celeste' in Estcourt. His worry was that Africans living just beyond the boundaries of his farm were stealing his crops and wood. Having failed to get a conviction through the law courts he sought a more direct course of action. He placed a complaint with the R H Addison, the local magistrate. He identified all the laws 'Soso' had contravened, and the crimes his wives had been found guilty of. He described 'Soso' as being of "bad character" and requested his eviction from the district. Initially, the view of George Leuchars, Secretary for Native Affairs was that he could not "see the slightest reason why Soso's kraal should be moved". Then Leuchars, not renowned for defending the interests of Africans, did a volte face. Suspecting 'Soso' of being politically involved (as an Ethiopian 'preacher') he found reason to instruct Addison to give 'Soso' "formal notice to move his kraal next winter". As it was, 'Soso' had decided already to move himself, having become tired of "Mr Woodgate's persecutions".⁶³

The third case involves General Charles B Lloyd, the first Commissioner of Agriculture, the first, and long-standing, president of the Mool River FA and the first commanding officer of the Weenen Yeomanry.⁶⁴ Lloyd didn't have a problem of labour per se. He had loyal tenants some of whom he wished to move to Pietermaritzburg to look after his wife who was removing there for the winter of 1904. The problem was the need for passes. After numerous letters and interviews, Lloyd wrote in absolute exasperation to the Weenen magistrate. "I do not see what I am to do to carry out the Law I am also endeavouring to carry out the Law and not trying to evade it". Lloyd, after a lot of effort, was finally successful. What is clear from this case is that there was agreement between Lloyd and the Africans travelling to Pietermaritzburg. There was

60 KCM 24436, Mool River FA, minutes of special general meeting, 8 April 1908; KCM 33859, Umvoti AS, minutes of special general meeting, 22 March 1919.

61 The section (8) of the law transgressed made it an offence punishable with a £5 fine for Africans to harbour criminals or conceal evidence. The section cited in correspondence actually makes NO provision for eviction.

62 SNA 1/1/311, 1124/1904, Lang to Secretary Native Affairs, 23 May 1904; Under Secretary for Native Affairs to Lang, 11 August 1904.

63 SNA 1/1/311, 1444/1904, Woodgate to Addison, 7 July 1904; Leuchars to Magistrate Estcourt, 21 July 1904; Leuchars to Magistrate Estcourt, 28 November 1904; Addison to Secretary for Native Affairs, 21 November 1904.

64 KCM 24435, Minutes of the Mool River Farmers Association; Laband and Thompson, 1990, 252.

trust between Lloyd and Tshuli who "is headman of the farm and can give full particulars". The arrangement between Lloyd and his tenants was made difficult by the cumbersome nature of the law and the power of state officials.⁶⁵

These three cases demonstrate a number of tendencies: farmers preferred to enter paternalist relations and agreements directly with Africans;⁶⁶ the state and its laws had the capacity to interfere with such arrangements and make the farmer's life more difficult - conversely, the state could be resorted to if no personal agreement was made between farmer and African tenant/labourer/neighbour. In the latter case, it was more likely that the farmer laying the complaint would be newly settled without a stable resident tenant population and with little ability to enforce his will other than by offering high wages (which he could not afford) or using the state apparatus. In these three cases, the state was as much a hindrance as an aid. And the local farmer organisation had absolutely no part to play in any of these dealings. If then, we are to understand farmer organisation as having a role, it is at the level of policy making and lobbying, rather than in the daily routines of farmer-tenant relations.

After the South African war the state expanded and became professionalised. Relations between farmer and magistrate became more formal.⁶⁷ The state was more present in agricultural life, making demands for example of statistics as farming became more scientific. The direct access to state officials which ONF farmers had in the nineteenth century was steadily eroded, dramatically so after Union.⁶⁸

How close was the relationship of farmers and their organisations to the state? Were relations efficacious? In certain instances, individual farmers were closely related to government ministers and officials and it is certain that this enhanced their ability to get state assistance when they needed it. One example will suffice. William Leslie farmed near Estcourt in the Weenen division. He was a founder member of the local FA, the Weenen Yeomanry Cavalry and the local Rifle Association. His daughter was married to H D Winter, himself a farmer in the district, who was elected representative for Weenen (1893) and subsequently became Minister of Agriculture (1899-1903) and Native Affairs. Two of Leslie's sons were farmers while the third was a magistrate.⁶⁹

The relationship between AS/FAs and magistrates and government officials was close. Magistrates served on many AS executives and they were frequently consulted and invited to meetings. This could be particularly effective when making a case to government. In the mid 1880s the local FA at Estcourt and the magistrate both condemned beer drinking among African workers, and appealed for government intervention (Burton-Clark, 1988, 193). The close ties gave farmers direct access to a magistrate's services and cleared communication channels, ensuring that farmers were kept informed of important local developments.

65 SNA 1/1/311, 1255/1904, Lloyd to Magistrate Weenen, 15 June 1904; Lloyd to Magistrate Weenen, 13 June 1904.

66 In using the term 'paternalist' here, I am associating myself with Robert Ross's 'weak' definition of the term, which is to say, that dominant individuals (mostly men) realized that their dominance entailed duties as well as rights. While some (a few) farmers treated their labourers as though they were more than just paid-providers of labour service (which comes closer to Ross's stronger definition of paternalism (Ross, 1995, 39)), few, if any, of them treated labour as extended kin.

67 This became particularly true after Union and ever more so, as magistrates were moved around and were thus unfamiliar with local farmers. See Loudon, 1970, 62.

68 The process was, however, not uniform or all pervasive. Midland communities worked hard to gain the friendship of magistrates and make them feel part of the 'white community'. This is evidenced in the case of the Estcourt magistrate who, on his departure from the district, was hosted to a dinner by the Women's Institute, the Tennis Club, the Parish Association and bowling club (of which he was President) (Mazower, 1991, 84-5).

69 *Natal Agricultural Journal*, 7, 1904, 1039-40.

The presence of parliamentary members and ministers on the executives of AS/FAs was also an obvious boon. In 1889, for example, T K Murray used his influence in the Legislative Council to get the government to donate £100 in prize money (1889) (Gordon, 1984, 38).

And yet one should be careful not to exaggerate the influence of the AS/FAs nor their closeness to government. Many of their requests were not acceded to. Others took a long time. In 1890, for example, the HFA petitioned for a branchline to Howick. The line was finally built in 1911. And during much of this time, the HFA was chaired by NAU president and government minister, Thomas Hyslop! (Scotney and Scott-Shaw, 1984, 14, 25).

In fact, the AS/FAs were not primarily concerned with obtaining state support. As we shall see, their functions were many, not least in creating a progressive farmers' voice and a sense of community. So, for example, George Sutton of the HFA (and Natal Premier) consistently advocated greater government support of the Veterinary department and agricultural experiments, yet even this limited demand on government did not meet with the approval of all members who were sceptical of government involvement (Scotney and Scott-Shaw, 1984, 27). It is beyond the scope of this chapter to measure the influence of AS/FAs or the NAU on government policy. A few general points can be ventured however. In the immediate context of farm life, AS/FAs were not significant in relation to labour, though central in marketing. As agriculture became more competitive and the state more involved, their role changed to include advocacy. This progression was accelerated by the recession, which lasted from 1903 (some say from 1906) to 1909 (Duminy and Guest, 1989, 355) Bambatha's rebellion (which made huge fiscal demands of the state) and various agricultural pestilences which brought many farmers to the edge of bankruptcy. Many agricultural issues were raised in government by farmers who were in office. Between 1900 and 1910 only one of Natal's four premiers (Hime) was not a midland farmer. All of the cabinets contained many farmers and parliament was heavily skewed towards the rural area as well.

After Union, the state became ever more professionalised, with a code of scientific management and justice which went in the face of the paternalistic orientation by which farmers had been conducting their affairs. In 1927, for example, police refused to act on warrants issued by the Estcourt magistrate because of their questionable legality.⁷⁰ Farmers were outraged, objecting that natives "should be taught to respect their Magistrate" and not be "assisted and encouraged to defy him". Furthermore a Native Affairs official, sympathetic to farmers, speculated that a farmer "could hardly be blamed if he resorted to some violent or illegal method" to solve the problem.⁷¹

Section 6 Agricultural Shows - Creating a Farming Community

Life in the midlands, even in the 1880s, could be lonely and socially atomised. Farmers were often separated by large distances from one another and it was generally many miles to the local village. There was a good deal of social interaction throughout the period, with farmer diaries testifying to the importance and frequency of visits. Family ties, shared histories and locality determined patterns of visiting. For farmers in a wider area to get together required organisation. As was indicated in earlier chapters, sport was an important organisational means of bringing people together. But all the sports were aimed at specific groups and were

70 CAD, NTS 9252, 1/371, Part 1, CNC (Natal) to SNA, 3 July 1928.

71 CAD, NTS 9252, 1/371, Part 1, unsigned memo, 7 September 1927.

not entirely inclusive. The agricultural show, organised by agricultural societies, was by far the most inclusive of social events. In fact as a yearly event, this dominated the village social calendar.

Peter McKenzie remembered the first agricultural show at Bulwer in 1893. It was held at 'Highbury', the farm and hotel owned by the Mingays. At this time most of the district's farmers were bachelors. They all arrived at the show, not so much out of interest in the exhibits, of which there were very few, but in the hope of fun. "I never saw grown-up people enjoy themselves more, and I certainly never enjoyed any other Show so much myself. We all stayed the night at Mingay's store and hotel; there was very little liquor going, but plenty of songs" (McKenzie, 1990, 8).

By the 1890s the agricultural show had become a major event throughout Natal. The lead had been given by the Pietermaritzburg Agricultural Society whose shows grew in importance until, in 1904, royal assent was given to its show being called the Royal Show Show. At this time all agricultural societies were asked to hold their shows early, allowing the Royal Show Show to be the climax of the season (Gordon, 1984, 46-7). The show became synonymous with jollity, grandeur, display (social and agricultural) and competition. It coincided with Pietermaritzburg's "season of festivity" and included celebration of the Queen's birthday (Hattersley, 1938, 83). Its status was such that after Union it was acknowledged as one of the country's most prestigious shows while locally, it was chosen for a while to host the premier schoolboy rugby game of the season, that between Hilton and Michaelhouse (Gordon, 1984, 61).

The Royal Show had never been purely an agricultural show. Its founders and early organisers were all well aware of the importance of providing a social focus for the colony's far-flung farmers. Initially this was centred on horse racing, showing and selling since many of the colony's richest farmers were infatuated with horses.⁷² The formula was successful and by the early 1890s the royal show was attracting 6000 visitors each year (Gordon, 1984 39).

Agricultural shows were expensive to run and were organisationally demanding. In due course, as government funding became less generous and demands to become involved in agricultural politics more insistent, local shows bent the knee to the Royal Show Show which, by the mid 1920s was the only agricultural show for white farmers in Natal.⁷³ Nevertheless, in our period, the agricultural show was the major focus of ASs. An accompanying function was the purchase of show and sale grounds and the erection of agricultural halls. Throughout the midlands, AS/FAs put titanic efforts into these projects, squeezing cash-strapped farmers for donations, seeking government land grants, approaching local builders for supplies at cost and architects for free services. All the AS/FAs which I have examined had constructed their own halls by the turn of the century or within a decade of their establishment. So important was the agricultural hall that the Polela FA, one of the midlands' smallest, built two in the first eleven years of its existence! Established in 1891, its first hall was burnt down a few years after erection, but a second was built and opened in 1902.⁷⁴

It was the AS/FAs which initiated the building of the halls and the establishment of show grounds. In their endeavours, they generally appealed to the townspeople for assistance,

72 Three men who dominated the Royal Show (all were presidents), all owned thoroughbred race horses and were fiercely competitive with one another. They were Charles Barter, Lushington Philips, and P A R Otto. All were well-known at the Victoria Club as well. Of the presidents during the Show's first decade only Barter was a farmer, and he not primarily one.

73 Agricultural shows for African farmers began in the 1920s as a way of shoring up "disintegrating relations in the countryside" and thus socially controlling Africans (Hughes, 1988, 17).

74 Private correspondence, Desmond Mingay, 11 March, 1988.

invoking district loyalty as they did so.⁷⁵ And when a show was held, it was presented as being a reflection of the district, not just of its farmers. Local merchants were asked to donate prizes and to become involved.⁷⁶ Attracting a big name to open the show was important. Umvoti did well in this regard, no doubt assisted by having two former ministers of government as patrons (Sir George Leuchars and W A Deane).⁷⁷ Among the most prominent men to open the show were Duncan McKenzie (1912), Charles Smythe (1913) and Louis Botha (1918).⁷⁸ A perusal of AS/FA records reveals that the majority of time was spent on organising shows and sales. Associated activities included compiling the list of events and judges, arranging the catering, raising funds, eliciting support from local town organisations, ensuring the support of other AS/FAs and inviting speakers.

The importance attached to this function was mirrored in the interest taken in it by the local press and populace. Charmaine Coulson, the historian of Richmond, summarizes the importance of these events. "The highlight of the show was the Ball held on the last evening. It was always an elaborate affair, and lavish suppers were provided by members of the Ladies Section of the Agricultural Society. Formal dress was obligatory, the men wearing dress-suits and the women beautiful ball gowns." The ball normally ended at 2am (Coulson, 1986, 309).

At Donnybrook the biggest social event of the decade was the opening of the Farmers Association Hall in 1913. The opening received minute scrutiny and coverage from the local journalist. S/he commented that "Ideal weather conditions prevailed, and the large crowd which assembled had evidently come out in the best of good humour." 200 people attended the ball. These included all the local dignitaries who are each identified by name in the newspaper report. The magistrate and parson, the local Justices of the Peace, members of neighbouring AS/FAs, local businesspeople and, of course, the Donnybrook FA committee. The occasion was judged not just by the weather and turnout, but by sartorial standards. The journalist offered extravagant description of the assembled company. "[W]hile it is obviously impossible to describe all the gowns worn at this fashionable function, some of the most artistic and striking were the following: - Mrs Harris looked charming in extremely handsome gown of old gold satin, with an overdress of fine black lace of rare quality. ...". S/he commented on other aspects of the event, complimenting all involved. "For the catering, which was carried out by the Ladies of the district, no praise is too high. These good dames, both young and old, bountifully supplied all kinds of dainties and delicacies".⁷⁹

The hall was generally the social centre of the midlands village. It was used by dramatic and debating societies and by political parties. Numerous committee meetings were held there. Prize givings and memorial services tended to happen there as well. For white farmers and villagers the agricultural hall was concrete testimony to their labours, productivity, indeed to their very existence. In other contexts the halls could assume an entirely different symbolic significance. In 1906 the men held responsible for the killings of Hunt and Armstrong at Trewirgie, Richmond, were tried in the Richmond Agricultural Hall. 12 of the 24 accused were sentenced to death and shot (Shepstone, 1937, 48).

The agricultural show provided a place for every white who lived in the midlands. Going to the show, being at the show, confirmed for everyone their membership of a distinctive community.

75 KCM 33659, Umvoti Agricultural Society, Minutes of a Special Meeting held at Commercial Hotel, 14 October 1911.

76 KCM 33659, Umvoti Agricultural Society, Minutes of committee meeting, Saturday, ? December 1911.

77 William Arthur Deane (1868-1958) farmed in Umvoti. He was elected to Parliament in 1901 and in 1906 became Minister of Agriculture.

78 KCM 33659, Umvoti Agricultural Society, minutes of annual general meeting, 23 October 1912; annual general meeting, 31 October 1913; executive council meeting, 8 June 1918.

79 KCM 43085, Donnybrook FA, minutes of the annual general meeting, Saturday, 27 September 1913.

But its inclusivity did not gloss over the hierarchies implicit in the event. The organising committee obviously took pride of place. Committee members, as we have already seen, were the farmers who were well-off and geographically close enough to town to attend committee meetings with regularity. These were the men who were able to take out debentures to pay for the hall, the show ground or whatever the society needed to advance its claim as being the leading organisation in the district. Then there were the farmers who 'showed'. Once again, these tended to be the 'progressive' farmers, men like P D Simmons of Mool River who year after year won major prizes for cattle, merino sheep and wool at the Royal Show. And from across the midlands, the 'progressive' farmers secured their reputation, or made it, by winning agricultural prizes. So for example, Ixopo's J T Foster (of 'Stainton') and General Arnott ('Esperanza'), became renowned for their Shorthorn cattle (Gordon, 1984, 55). But even if you were not a farmer with products that were potentially prize-winning, you could be a part of the show by being a steward or judge yourself. In the Umvoti and Richmond Agricultural Societies, the lists of judges include a member of virtually every ONF in the district. With often 20 to 30 categories to judge, it was possible to include a large spectrum of the local farming population.⁸⁰ As time went on, judging became more scientific and the realm of the expert and such inclusivity was no longer possible, but for much of our period at least, the local agricultural show was hosted and manned (sic) by the people of the district.⁸¹

The agricultural show then, was a mechanism (within strict racial limits) of inclusion rather than exclusion. It allowed for the local endorsement of existing social and economic hierarchies and, to a large extent, ensured that harmony existed. The annual general meeting was a generally well-attended function, with a dinner or some other form of function accompanying it. The meetings invariably included a long speech by the president, outlining the district's progress, problems ahead, achievements and so on. The tone was normally self-congratulatory but with some carefully chosen admonitions too: a captain's assessment of the team's performance during the season. Reports of meetings frequently capture the atmosphere by referring to the president's speech being "punctuated by applause and exclamations of approval".⁸² In short, meetings were affirmations of group identity, and implicit within this, of the status of the president and his committee. It was not always plain sailing: with regards to agricultural shows there were squabbles about prizes, about fairness and about the composition of organising committees. But this needs to be judged by the increases in entries and the steady expansion of the show to include such ice-breakers of the modern age as the bioscope, brought to Greytown's agricultural show in 1919.⁸³

The district's leading farmers used the AS/FAs to claim to be the authoritative voice of the district. In 1897, for example, the right of the MRFA to host an important public meeting was emphasized by A K Murray. All societies in the district, he said, "looked upon this one as the parent society".⁸⁴ And twenty years later when Greytown's Patriotic League decided to hold a fancy dress ball to raise funds, it was obvious that the first organisation they turned to was the Umvoti AS.⁸⁵

80 See for example, KCM 33646, Richmond AS, minutes of a meeting, 14 April 1886 and 28 April 1886; and KCM 33659, Umvoti AS, minutes of an executive committee meeting, 8 February 1919.

81 In 1910, after an appeal by the Department of Agriculture, the NAU took up the issue of standardizing judging and had affiliates adopt uniform criteria of judging.

82 KCM 33659, Umvoti AS, annual general meeting, 23 October 1912, apparently published in the *Greytown Gazette*.

83 KCM 33659, Umvoti AS, minutes of executive committee meeting, 25 January 1919.

84 KCM 24435, Mool River FA, minutes of a special general meeting, 24 April 1897.

85 KCM 33659, Umvoti AS, minutes of executive committee meeting, 19 May 1919.

The agricultural shows not only acted as a focus for local community, they also served to integrate a wider farming population, introducing farmers to one another, through a yearly repetitive exercise, renewing and strengthening the notion of collective endeavour and identity. This was achieved not just by farmers exhibiting at shows outside their own district (primarily at the Royal Show). Judges were drawn from far and wide and agricultural shows (and sales) were carefully staggered so that there were very few, if any clashes.⁸⁶ It was thus possible for merchants, auctioneers, and farmers to circulate to all the shows. The process whereby agricultural shows were rationalised involved cooperation between AS/FAs. This became ever closer and was institutionalised by reciprocal arrangements of one sort or another. In 1898 the Mool River FA accepted the principle of reciprocity with other FAs.⁸⁷ In 1909, for example, the Howick FA made the NRFA president, an ex-officio member (Scotney and Scott-Shaw, 1984, 29).

The process by which the agricultural societies strengthened their ties and created a particular understanding of the Natal midland farming community was not linear, smooth, uncontested or unproblematic.

Elections for office could be hotly contested. Members could resign in a huff. Notions of honour could be transgressed and apologies demanded. Offence might be taken at some political comment and dire action threatened. Yet without exception, the AS/FAs survived this turbulence. One major reason for them so doing was the insistence on procedure (ways of channelling and controlling dissent, preventing it from becoming destructive rather than merely disruptive). Another was a commitment to inclusion, of fostering the idea that the AS/FAs were for and of the farmers.

In the case of the former mechanism, the furore surrounding Cotton Acutt of the Mool River FA will illustrate the point. Acutt was part of the large and influential Acutt family (Miller, 1978). He was one of the biggest and earliest farmers in the district, cultivated rhubarb for export and headed the local Rifle Association. On a number of occasions his robust belief in the rights of the individual and the need for initiative got him into trouble with prickly fellow committee members. In 1897 Acutt called a public meeting in Mool River to discuss the approaching rinderpest. He was accused by the secretary of trying to destroy the MRFA. His response was that he had acted only because the President, Herbert Blaker,⁸⁸ had done nothing, and had "sat mum".⁸⁹ A month later the matter was still simmering. The President defended himself against the insinuation of complacency.

Mr Cotton Acutt said he was sorry the Pres. (sic) should bring this matter forward again. He thought it had been settled at last meeting. If he had done wrong he had already been punished and had taken his punishment, but it was not generous to harp continually on the subject.

On a separate matter, Acutt was then accused of ignoring committee instruction when, as a delegate to the Farmers Conference, he had voted against the withdrawal of the 'kaffir agent' in Johannesburg and had "neglected his instructions to bring before that same conference the fact that the Res. Magte. at Estcourt had ordered scabby sheep to be travelled along the public road." Acutt left the meeting saying "he had no time just at present to answer Mr Richards. He had a meeting of the Rifle Assoc. to attend, of which he was Pres and had already wasted some

⁸⁶ For example, KCM 24435, Mool River FA, minutes of a special meeting, n/d c October 1895.

⁸⁷ KCM 24435, Mool River FA, minutes of annual general meeting, 30 July 1898.

⁸⁸ Herbert Blaker came to Natal in 1864 and began the farm, 'South Downs', in 1868. He won prizes at agricultural shows for cattle and sheep. He sent his son, George Ernest Blaker to Hilton College. George took over the farm, joined the NC, played a host of representative sports and was steward at the MRFA stock sales (*Cape Times*, n/d, 245).

⁸⁹ KCM 24435, Mool River FA, minutes of special general meeting, 27 February 1897.

time here. He might tell them, however, that he had voted against the removal of the Native Agent because that course appeared right to him and he could not vote blindly." He "simply and flatly refused to be 'bound down hand and foot' on any subject." The matter was debated heatedly, with a vote to remove Acutt as delegate to the Farmers Conference succeeding. The controversy split the committee. Other issues were drawn into the arena. The secretary, Mr West, "having brought to the notice of the meeting the serious accusation preferred against him by Mr Acutt 'That of twisting the books of the Assoc. to suit his own palate' requested the Assoc. to require Mr Acutt to withdraw this serious charge or to substantiate it."⁹⁰

A year later, things had cooled off. West and Acutt were, together, delegates to the Farmers Conference. At the annual general meeting they presented a joint front: "The Delegates replied in a few words that doing their duty was their sole aim and reward and assuring the Association of the pleasure and gratification they felt in having secured their approbation. (applause)." Four years later, Cotton Acutt was elected president, unanimously.⁹¹

The second means by which the unity of farmers was maintained was to define their area of provenance clearly and closely to ensure that other interests were not destructively brought within the ambit of AS/FA affairs. 'Politics' was always avoided. The President of the Mool River FA stressed this in his 1910 presidential speech:

I have always steadfastly refused to allow your Association to be used as a medium by any political organisation or politician, or to be dragged into political polemics, as I maintain such are not within our province and only tend to lower our prestige, when we require our voice heard in matters vital to our interests. I hope such will ever be our policy.⁹²

For the most part, this policy was successful and despite the fact that members of AS/FAs contested parliamentary elections, there is no record of representative political debates ever being drawn into the AS/FA sphere.⁹³

A commitment to inclusion overrode virtually all other considerations. In 1913 Umvoti AS chair, E J van Rooyen, said that some committee members should not be re-elected because they "never attended meetings and were no more good than dead men." His call (or was it just a statement of exasperation) was not heeded.⁹⁴ When members took umbrage and resigned, no matter how cantankerous and difficult they might be, they were always asked to reconsider.⁹⁵ And when members failed to pay their subscriptions, moralistic calls for them to be exposed (and thus humiliated) were defeated.⁹⁶

When one pages through the minutes of the AS/FAs one is struck by the repetitive character of organisational activity. The meetings occur with regularity, each accompanied by a particular ritual, each supportive of organisational and social hierarchy. It was in these performances, year in and year out, that the integrative power of the AS/FAs lay. People are not members of a community because they objectively own so much, or have such and such an occupation or live

⁹⁰ KCM 24435, Mool River FA, minutes of special general meeting, 27 March 1897.

⁹¹ KCM 24435, Mool River FA, minutes of annual general meeting, 30 July 1898.

⁹² KCM 24436, Mool River FA, minutes of annual general meeting, 27 August 1910.

⁹³ In the 1892 elections, for example, the brogo division was contested by Joseph Baynes and Henry Nicholson (office-bearers in Richmond AS) and Grafton (Chair of the Polola AS) (Pearse, 1981, 132).

⁹⁴ KCM 33659, Umvoti AS, minutes of annual general meeting, 31 October 1913.

⁹⁵ KCM 33659, Umvoti AS, minutes of executive committee meeting, 28 November 1919.

⁹⁶ KCM 24435, Mool River FA, minutes of a meeting, 16 September 1896.

in a particular place. Nor are communities created in a simple, one-off process of social construction. Communities as dynamic, fluid, unstable social forms exist only to the extent that the members who consider themselves to be part of that community, continue so to do. It was through the metronomic doings of the farmer organisations that belonging was established, confirmed and reinforced. To be counted a farmer involved, 'naturally', being a member of the AS/FA (Pennefather interview, 1993). The longer the AS/FAs functioned, the greater their influence, the more undeniable their history, the more forceful their claim to be the farmers' voice. And histories could be written and spoken to prove the seamless nature of the farming community, one undivided and natural.⁹⁷ This interpretation totally conceals the fact that in the AS/FAs, people were silenced and excluded, hierarchies were created and perpetuated. It hides the fact that in this ostensibly neat and comfortable community, dissension occurred and power prevailed.

In a candid description of the concentration of power Mrs B Gordon, of the Greytown Museum wrote, "The History of the Umvoti Agricultural Society is so closely linked with the History of Greytown itself, it is impossible to separate the two The names of the members of the Agricultural Society are the same names found taking part in all the activities of the town" (Gordon, n/d, 6). The concentration of influence and power was awesome, but not unusual. Yet the ONFs were not the only families in the area and, over time, they became numerically less significant. Their monopoly of the AS/FA limelight was achieved by consciously excluding other people and by having their claims to elevation accepted by fellow farmers.

Blacks (Indians and Africans) were considered to have no claim at all upon the goodwill of or inclusion in the AS/FA, though only the Umvoti AS made this explicit.⁹⁸ In 1905 the Mool River FA faced the 'threat' of Indian competition: "After the first few markets, it was evident that Arab and coolie traders intended to try and monopolise the trade. A separate table was, therefore, provided for their use, which was entirely trade stuff and not grown by them, and the produce on this table was sold after everything else. Since this arrangement has been in force the produce tabled by these people has been infinitesimal. Your market is a European one; keep it so long as you can."⁹⁹ While there are very few references to Indians in the nineteenth century, in the twentieth century, virtually every AS/FA was setting up 'Indian Committees' and passing motions for tabling at the NAU to have Indian competition restricted and Indians repatriated.¹⁰⁰

Much the same treatment was meted out to Africans. Seldom regarded as anything other than a labour supply, they were generally referred to in impersonal terms. But Africans were not only idle or unwilling workers, they were also people who were careless, who carried disease. They could, therefore, come to the attention of AS/FAs as problems. In trying to contain East Coast Fever, Africans were given specific consideration. "The greatest difficulty would be the kafir, but ... by making the kafir know that he must keep his cattle in one place, and entirely off any infected area, this threatened plague would be stamped out."¹⁰¹ In Polela the spread of typhus was of concern in 1920. The president of the Donnybrook FA noted that "owing to difficulty of controlling Natives in sanitary matters they (government officials) have an up-hill task. We cannot but view the position with alarm and should assist as much as possible by seeing that the premises occupied by the Natives in our employ are kept as clean as possible

97 Scootney and Scott-Shaw, the official historians of the LRDAS achieve this by claiming that the LRDAS was formed so that "farmers of the district could speak with one voice in their approach to government" (1984, 1).

98 This is a vastly more complex issue, since farmers did business with Indian traders, especially in the nineteenth century, and even after the deluge of anti-Indian legislation, relations between established, local Indian traders and white farmers could be cordial (Huttenback, 1976, Rahman interview, 1992). KCM 33659, Umvoti AS, minutes of annual general meeting, 23 October 1912.

99 KCM 24435, Mool River FA, minutes of annual general meeting, 26 May 1905. President's address.

100 For example, KCM 33659, Umvoti AS, minutes of annual general meeting, 5 October 1919.

101 KCM 24436, Mool River Farmers Association, minutes of special general meeting, 26 September 1908.

and endeavour to control the movements of their Natives."¹⁰² The African was the unpredictable, the other. As in most other areas of settler life, Africans provided the backdrop to AS/FA activities. They were, for settlers, like the Drakensberg which kept a brooding watch over the midlands of Natal: sometimes threatening, sometimes beautiful, never to be wished away, never far from view, always to be subdued and conquered.

There was another category which sat awkwardly on the benches of the excluded. The farmers' wives or, as they were always called, 'the ladies'. Policy towards women in the AS/FAs was most uneven. In some, they maintained a benign and supportive presence, making tea and bringing good cheer to the post-meeting gatherings. In others they were wooed, praised, though never given any indication that their aspirations could legitimately encompass leadership. Finally, there were some AS/FAs who took a hostile position, pushing them to the margins, rebutting their attempts to claim a place.

In the Umvoti AS, women were given a central place in the organisation of entertainment and catering. In 1912 the president applauded "The energy and enthusiasm displayed by the ladies". Their endeavours had brought in £206 "and they deserved unstinted praise for their efforts to further the interests of the Society."¹⁰³ Eligible for full membership, the president described the increase in women members in 1917 as a "happy augury because while we can keep the ladies interested we are sure to be able to make things go".¹⁰⁴ The men of Mool River were not nearly so inclusive or generous towards their 'ladies'. Motions put to meetings to allow 'ladies' to do the catering at stock sales were defeated in 1908 and 1914.¹⁰⁵ In 1915, possibly as a result of a decline in members (away on active service) the rules of the AS were altered to admit 'lady' members. In that same year however, they were again refused the right to cater at agricultural sales.¹⁰⁶

The role of women, to which we return in the next chapter, should be seen not just as exclusion or inclusion. It was often a mixture of both. Jeff Hearn argues that even when "exclusion of women from some organisations was absolute, organisations still existed as relations between women and men. Exclusions were both imposed, by men, and negotiated, between women and men, particularly in the minutiae of social relationships" (Hearn, 1992, 143).

Although they were a minority, there were farmers who chose not to join the AS/FAs. Initially, most farmers were members of the organisations. But in time, as the white farming population swelled, the proportion dropped. In Umvoti, for example, the Executive Committee of the AS raised the issue in 1917. "We boast that our County is one of the wealthiest in Natal with a white population of 1,944, and yet a Society that is working in the interests of one and all can only show a membership of two hundred."¹⁰⁷ There were a range of reasons why farmers chose not to join: AS/FA subscriptions could be high; the actual benefit in material terms to members was limited; the policies proposed by AS/FAs did not suit all; there were other organisations (sports clubs, old boy societies, family-affiliation) which gave farmers a voice; meetings could be inconvenient and futile if one had no interest in office or organisational politics. In the end,

102 KCM 43085, Doonbrook FA, minutes of annual general meeting, 23 September 1920.

103 KCM 33859, Umvoti AS, minutes of annual general meeting, 23 October 1912.

104 KCM 33859, Umvoti FA, minutes of annual general meeting, 30 November 1917.

105 KCM 24436, Mool River FA, minutes of a special committee meeting, 24 October 1908; committee meeting of the fat stock show committee, 15 July 1914.

106 This was also the experience at the Royal Show (Gordon, 1984, 60). KCM 24436, Mool River FA, minutes of special general meeting, 31 July 1915; committee meeting, 12 November 1915.

107 KCM 33859, Umvoti AS, minutes of annual general meeting, 30 November, 1917.

it was the AS/FAs which needed farmer-members, rather than farmers who needed AS/FA membership. It was the success of the ONF culture that farmers found so many different locations to express their voices and find institutional or organisational identity.¹⁰⁸ In fact, few white farmers seem to have been silenced. Those that were will be discussed in the chapter 9.

In the end, the significance of the AS/FAs lay in giving a platform for, and status to, those farmers who were held to be leaders among farmers. Initially, this did little more than establish a standard of class identity. Presidents and chairmen (of AS and FAs respectively) symbolized the worthy and sturdy midland farmer. They created a community and gave it access to markets and state officials. But this was at a time when relationships on the farm, especially with farm labour, were conducted in a very direct way. So long as the state did not challenge these relations, the AS/FAs were considered benign by non-members. The pennant flown by the most forceful, influential and 'progressive' farmers who led the AS/FAs was of modernization - of scientific farming, of improvement. Since the state was not able to force any of these changes onto farmers, the message of modernization (especially as it did not include a demand for the transformation of labour tenancy into wage labour) was not threatening. With the dawning of the twentieth century, agricultural politics became more significant. Marketing became more critical, but there was little debate here: the AS/FAs held sales but these were relatively uncontroversial, giving members little advantage over non-members. It was in the area of labour relations that matters became heated. In the switch from pastoral to arable or mixed farming, more labour was required. Some farmers had the connections to obtain such labour, but many, the late-arrivals especially, did not. And so the AS/FAs began to be battlegrounds for policy.¹⁰⁹

CONCLUSION

In 1992, I interviewed Peter and Priscilla Francis on their small holding at 'Caversham', on the scenic road from Dargle to Balgowan. When I asked them about AS/FAs, they said, almost in unison, that it was "inconceivable" not to be a member and that these organisations were a "solid part of the farming structure" (Francis interview, 1992). These views capture the passion and loyalty that farmer organisation can still arouse amongst ONFs. But, on a more sobering note, David Kimber, who lives less than ten kilometres away from the Francis's, said that AS/FAs have lost their character. The influx of new people into the area has diluted membership. They are no longer the meeting place of people who all knew one another, a place where new families could be integrated and assisted (Kimber Interview, 1994).

Both views look back upon a time when the AS/FAs were in their heyday. When they fulfilled the dual function of economic mobilization and social integration. These were the days when they were the 'farmer's voice' and gave farmers a collective sense of themselves which did not flow automatically from the fact that they were all white landowners, deriving most of their earnings from farming. This chapter has stressed that the organisations did not just secure the economic interests of farmers, nor did they promote the narrow class interests of their leaders.¹¹⁰ AS/FAs were important in marketing and policy making. But there were many issues which they could neither successfully address nor solve. Labour was one area in which AS/FAs found difficulty in producing a united position and pressurising government to

108 The best known example was Joseph Baynes who refused to join the NAU, but was a member of the Rand, Victoria and Durban clubs, the Royal Agricultural Society and the Pietermaritzburg Botanic Society, as well as an MLA for much of the period (Pearse, 1981, 249).

109 In 1918 and 1919 motions concerning the resuscitation of the *isibhale* labour system were put at the NAU congress, resulting in heated debate. The motion was carried in 1919 but the Native Affairs Department refused to implement "such a retrograde step". CAD, NTS 9252, 1/371, Part I, CNC (Natal) to SNA, 15 November 1919.

110 Apart from my own work which focusses primarily on the economic utility of farmer organisation (Morrell, 1986), Heather Hughes's work on agricultural shows for Africans in Natal, also adopts too narrow an economic focus (Hughes, 1988).

intervene systematically on behalf of farmers. This was not least because of the diversity of farmers' labour needs. Yet it was one of their successes that these differences over labour were mediated, class cohesion maintained and lasting divisions prevented.

State involvement (in terms, for example, of aid, legislation, infrastructural development) became more important as time went on, but equally farmers were keen to retain their autonomy in relation to farm labour, marketing, etc. Farmers had institutions and networks of their own, to guarantee their cohesion and success as a class. They wanted and needed state support in some areas, but could not avoid the expansion of the state (and the rise of the modern nation state that went with it) and thus became ensnared in the new world, but all the time they protected and fostered the institutions which had in the first instance secured their class identity and brought them together.

Chapter 8 Family, Women and Inheritance

The importance of the family as a social unit is rarely denied. For many, it is the most important of all social institutions, being the place where children are conceived and raised, socialised and given an identity. As I have already indicated (in chapter 2), the ONFs revered and were devoted to the family. It was of primary importance in providing social location and position. In order to be recognised, one needed a family and a family name. This chapter is divided into three sections: the first examines the establishment and constitution of the family, the second, focuses on women within the family, while the third delves into family inheritance practices. A theme of this chapter is the reproduction of the family.

The importance of the family in social reproduction is widely acknowledged. Marxist reproduction theory, for example, identified the family as an important ideological state apparatus, profoundly implicated in the rule of the state (Althusser, 1971). Many feminist texts identify the family as a key feature in the reproduction of class and gender inequality (Barrett and McIntosh, 1982). In this chapter, the instrumental logic which operated in these analyses will be avoided. Reproduction was not automatic, and neither was the form which it took. Connell's treatment of this issue is closer to the position taken in this chapter. While he sees the family as a basic location of patriarchal power (Connell, 1987, Ch 6), he is sensitive to variations in family form and open to the possibility that families might generate oppositional identities, as well as conformist identities (Connell, 1983, 56).

It is necessary before moving to the specificities of the old Natal family, to rehearse some of the well-known answers to the question: what makes the family important? For our purposes, one of the first answers should be that it gives men power. Within the family, patriarchy is at its most obvious - the stereotypical image of the father/husband, assuming the mantle of patriarch and making decisions, controlling resources and determining destinies is widespread. Even if we find such a representation exaggerated, we are unlikely to deny that it has some truth to it.¹ Especially for people socially well-located, the family is important in securing positions in the labour market (Connell, 1983, 148). In the colonial context, the Comaroffs argue that the newly created family reassured working class men that they would not slip back into the proletariat. In Britain, the proletariat had been regarded as close to African barbarians living in squalor and unreason, in unsettled family conditions. Newly arrived in Africa, settlers of such social origins, made strenuous efforts to create families which aligned them with the resident white gentry and distanced them from Africans and the image of African barbarity (Comaroff, 1992, 285). They continue: "the construction of the 'private' domain (in the family, in the home) was fundamental to the propagation of their social order; within it were contained the elemental relations of gender and generation upon which social reproduction depended" (Comaroff, 1992, 293). The family then, was not just important as a functioning social institution, it had symbolic value. In making sense of the world, and legitimating it, the family was frequently used as a metaphor of order. It was a "major organizing metaphor of state" (Corrigan and Sayer, 1985, 12).

It is necessary to state, to avoid any ambiguity, that the form of the family is not constant. It is obvious that the membership of a family changes - birth and death are the most obvious culprits. But over time as well, the size, shape, role and function of the family changes.

¹ A dissenting view from one branch of men's studies comes from Warren Farrell (1993). While accepting that men do have economic power (in the family and without), he argues that they carry disproportionate responsibility which results in high burnout, sickness and suicide rates. Furthermore, he argues that their economic power is diverted into the consumer power of women (who spend all the money which the men work so hard to earn).

"Families are not fixed, mechanical systems. They are fields of relationship Their configurations often change over time, as alliances form and dissolve and people enter and leave" (Connell, 1995, 146).² State intervention, new technologies and new economic circumstances all shape the family. Relationships within the family change. Over long periods, this change can be very marked (Stone, 1977). An impressive recent addition to the historical literature on the family comes from Leonora Davidoff and Catherine Hall (1987) in which they show that building the family was central to the objectives of the middle class man in Britain in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. They argue that "middle-class men who sought to be 'someone', to count as individuals because of their wealth, their power to command or their capacity to influence people, were, in fact, embedded in networks of familial and female support which underpinned their rise to public prominence" (Davidoff and Hall, 1987, 13). They argue that his primary concern, superceding the drive to accumulation, was to build and maintain the family. The emphasis of these studies is on family dynamics, the division of labour within families and the way in which the fortunes of all family members are caught up in the family context. But outcomes are not predetermined. The relationships which exist within the family (for example, between husband and wife, between parents and children, between grandparents and their offspring, between siblings) are unpredictable, and make the family a site of flux. Since the family could not exist without its members, each member could make some impact on its shape and functioning. If one begins from this point, then women within the family need not necessarily be viewed as subordinated and exploited. This position will be developed in section 2.

In some cases, it is possible to consider the family and the household as one and the same thing. In this study, this was frequently the case. Definitionally, however, it is important to distinguish them. Families can be considered as "relationships between persons which are understood by these persons to be in terms of blood or marriage or which are understood to have an equivalent status as these relationships" (Morgan, 1985, 66). Michael Gilding offers a political reading of family which is not in conflict with Morgan's description: "The concept of the family represents a sociopolitical ordering of kinship and co-residence in order to affix relations of obligation and dependence" (Gilding, 1991, 5). The two definitions have the advantage together of describing the family as a social site and alerting us to its volatile and portentous condition.

A family can be considered as a household where people share a common residence and its resources (Morgan, 1985, 66). In some contexts, however, households are not synonymous with families. In the American South, for example, Elizabeth Fox-Genovese's definition of household is distinct from family. This basic social unit, she says, is where people, "voluntarily or involuntarily, or under compulsion" pool their incomes and resources. The household, she argues, has no necessary link with a family, or to home, "which is a modern and ideologically charged term" (Fox-Genovese, 1988, 31).

What did the family do for men? It gave him a social place and social power, but it also limited him, constrained him. Philip Corrigan tries to capture this contradiction by describing different masculine relatednesses to women. "To be normal is to 'have' (in all senses) a or several woman/women and to have them without feeling, with anger and violence, casually - the dream is always endless (hetero) sex. Or is it? For there is also another dream sewn into this masculinity, that of responsibility and being 'in place' in the monogamous heterosexual family, to produce those 'goods' which are highly valued - 'the home', 'the children', 'the family' of respectability, of having made it." And this involves having a woman as a partner, and seeing

² D H J Morgan points out that there are a huge number of definitions of the family and it is generally sterile to argue simply in definitional terms (1985, 171-2). He cites Bourdieu's use of *habitus* as a way of alerting us to the weakness of static structural conceptions of the family: "people do not routinely follow rules or laws but rather evolve a set of practices, usages, strategies and understandings which emerge from the particular sets of economic conditions and constraints within which they find themselves" (Morgan, 1985, 173).

her in a different way from sexual object (Corrigan, 1990, 282). According to this definition, the family affirmed a man's masculinity while at the same time giving him an identity, and a place in society. In the nineteenth century it became more important than ever to have a family for reasons that went beyond biological reproduction. To be a normal male meant being functionally heterosexual. Scientists in the late nineteenth century vilified "nonreproductive, nonmarital forms of sexuality", linking this to a threat against the family and the nation (Nye, 1993, 98).

The family also provided the man with a place to unveil his vulnerability. Philip Corrigan argues that "only in private heterosexual space can [men] pour out their hearts and be vulnerable" (Corrigan, 1990, 282). I have tried to demonstrate in preceding chapters that men found other places and ways to be vulnerable. Male friendship was not emotionally sterile as implied by Corrigan. But sexual intimacy was most frequently obtained within the conjugal unit, and however complex and contradictory the effect, it is generally considered to have been an important aspect of marriage.

In terms of much feminist literature, to ask the question what did the family do for women, would be ridiculous. The answer generally is that the family subordinated women, or at least, that within the family, women became invisible and open to violence, abuse and exploitation. It will be argued in the next section, however, that ONF women identified closely with family, that it provided them with security and opportunity, and gave them a place (just as it did, men). Families could be oppressive environments for women, but it was calamitous for women not to have family location.

Wives and husbands were committed to the perpetuation of family. Women bore the physical discomfort, pain and danger of the burden of reproduction. Many died in childbirth. Beyond their biological roles, both wives and husbands also vested themselves in the reproduction of the family name. For many a father this became his major goal and focus of life. The reproduction of a family is a task quite different from the reproduction of other social institutions, such as clubs or regiments. In those cases, the institution does not die when its members die (or fail to reproduce). Rules, procedures and a social solidity which goes beyond the members which comprise them, ensure the perpetuation of these social institutions (Morgan, 1985, 286-7). Families, on the other hand, can 'die' as a result of biological or social misfortune (the failure to conceive a male heir or to see him reach maturity and himself marry a woman and have children). In the midlands there was little insurance against such mishaps - adoption or other forms of extending the family were not considered appropriate. What one could do was to ensure that the family's resources were distributed through generations in order to ensure that if an heir or heirs were produced, the social (rather than biological) perpetuation of the family was assured. These were quite separate but equally important. It was of little use to beget heirs and leave them without resources. In such instances, the family might as well have died, because it was the family name (and implicitly its influence and status) which patriarchs sought to ensure, rather than just the biological fact of conceiving children: Families do not reproduce themselves automatically: they reproduce themselves in particular forms as a result of conscious action/omission - giving birth to male heirs, leaving property, the family name and farm to particular offspring.

Families were crucial in a process of reproduction which kept class cultures and social identities alive. Older generations were responsible for versions of history which were "constructed and worked and reworked". The family, thus, established "links over time, not simply links between and across family generations, but also links that constitute(d) the continuity of society itself" (Morgan, 1985, 289). As I have indicated, the ONFs were a class in two senses: organised socially into an apparently cohesive, visible unit and representing itself

culturally as something other than it was. In both senses (because they cannot actually be separated as distinct functions or aspects) the role of the family elders were critical. They told the "family stories", repeating them many times. This storytelling was "more than chance personal reminiscing". Although it may begin with memories, "the main point is that a parent or grandparent wants to pass on that particular information about the past, feels it important that their descendants should know about it." In this way family stories passed down over several generations become legends (Byng-Hall, 1990, 216).

Section 1 Making the Settler Family

In chapter 2, the centrality of the family was explained in terms both of social and economic necessity and in terms of myth (the Old Natal Family). It remains for this section to look in greater depth at the reasons for and the ways in which families could be started, the form which the family took (and the retention of metropolitan links), and the economic relationships within families.

Amongst the features which undeniably signalled the coming of age for a male, was having a farm and a wife. To have a farm and a wife, meant being a family, having a home. For farmers, it was impossible to distinguish these various estates and most of men's lives were devoted to achieving this happy condition. Once this was achieved, a lot of energy was then spent ensuring that marriage was a circumstance which an heir could also enjoy.

Initially, the low density populations of the midlands made it difficult for men to find marriage partners.³ Marriage often occurred quite late in life because men needed to be economically independent before getting married (Beall, 1982, 115). There were economic advantages flowing from marriage, but the social importance of having a wife was initially not pressing. Living rough and single, in remote areas where social exchange was limited, there was no need of a wife who would look good, speak nicely, have good manners and generally amplify the achievements of her spouse. In short, there was no community which verified the importance of marriage and gave it social loading (meaning). As population density rose, villages got formed and a community was built up, so the importance of marriage grew. This was evident in three ways: for men, marriage, became a symbolic moment when they passed unquestionably into adulthood; for emerging family dynasties, marriage spoke of reproductive possibility and the perpetuation of the family line; for demographically limited communities, marriage offered promise of continuity and the prospect of nourishing local institutions and activities with new blood. Settler masculinity demanded that men accept responsibility not just for siring offspring, but for carrying forward the family name.

By 1880 if not long before, marriage became the socially sanctioned place of sexual intercourse. The custom of early settlers to cohabit with Africans was by 1880 publicly considered unacceptable and social proscription against any sexual liaison with Africans grew. White men continued to have sex with black women but mostly in secret.⁴ In some rare cases, unions became settled and were formalised. This appears to have been more frequent in the earlier than the later period. The growing social cohesion of the Natal gentry predicated on racial exclusivity and the elaboration of a racist discourse began to stigmatize such unions (Dubow, 1989).

3 This problem exercised the minds of colonial and imperial officials who were concerned to foster a pure race and decent families. Efforts were therefore made at the turn of the century to import single white women from Britain (van Helden and Williams, 1983).

4 The history of sex in colonial society is notoriously difficult to reconstruct, and I can only offer one tentative source here. Alan Paton's biographer, Peter Alexander, suggests that in the early years of the twentieth century Paton's father quite often clandestinely sought sex with black women (Alexander, 1994, 105-6).

For farmers, having land was a prerequisite for establishing a family. Land grants secured the earliest settlers. Those who committed themselves to the land, were generally able to expand their holdings (which were initially too small for profitable farming) by buying land cheaply from those who departed for the towns. The Nicholsons (Byrne settlers) were notable in this regard (Nicholson, 1986). A second way into land ownership was to make money by non-agricultural means (prospecting and transport-riding were the most lucrative).⁵ It should be added that many farms were not worked for lack of capital and it took windfall profits from prospecting, or hard-won profits from transport-riding to begin operations. Amongst the most notable in this category were the McKenzies and Moors. In the same category were the Sinclairs. They were kin of the McKenzies in Scotland: Duncan McKenzie (snr) having married Margaret Sinclair. Donald Sinclair (Margaret's brother) made the money he needed to buy his Dargle farm transporting mining equipment to Barberton (Sinclair interview, 1993).

Later immigrants often made use of family money in Britain to obtain land.⁶ One of the most prominent and enduring cases was that of Sir Henry Kimber whose great grandchildren still occupy one of the early family farms. He was a London businessman who became fabulously wealthy, owning land in Oklahoma, Texas, Tasmania, South Africa and Britain. He was a parliamentarian and was created baronet in 1904. In the 1880s he was chairman of the Natal Land and Colonization Company and used this position to buy farms in Natal on which he settled his son, P D Kimber in 1887 (Kimber interview, 1994). P D became a prominent farmer, buying the present family farm, Maritzdaal from Duncan McKenzie in 1889. Another case was that of Herbert W Cross who in 1896 came to Natal to farm. His grandfather bought him a 1500 acre farm at Nottingham Road. In due course, like his neighbours, he sent his son to Michaelhouse (Cross interview, 1993). At the turn of the century the Morphews and Solomons came to South Africa. Owen Solomon inherited money from his grandfather and mother and utilised this to set up near Howick (Solomon interview, 1992). Jeff Mophew established himself in the Dargle in 1901 with money borrowed from or given by his father. When he died, prematurely at age 41 in 1917, he owned 7824 acres of prime Midland farming land.⁷

Money obtained through marriage offered another way of acquiring land. This was one of the reasons why marriages were carefully arranged. William James Fly was 'indentured' to Charles Smythe in 1881. In 1886 he left his employ and with his wife farmed independently. In 1888 she died in childbirth (Childs, 1973, 131) Fly married again, this time to the daughter of a wealthy local family. He was thus able to buy a 2000 acre farm at Elandskop (Fly interview, 1992). Laurie Christie who farmed at Creighton was similarly enabled by marriage (Christie interview, 1993).

Historically, marriages have been a vehicle (via marriage settlements) for the transfusion of wealth between families (Stone, 1981, 84). While arranged marriages were uncommon, it was not infrequent for financial concerns to be central to this civil contract. There were few impetuous, love-driven unions in the period which testifies to the power of family considerations in determining marriage. In the early period, marriages between two brothers and two sisters were common. Among the reasons for this were the shortage of women and the practical difficulty of courting in sparsely settled regions. Some men circumvented these problems by arranging marriages: the Smith brothers, W K and John arranged with a shipping

5 Among the prominent families who had members at the diamond diggings were: Baynes, Fannin, Foster, Hathorn, Moor, Murray, Rawlinson, Slater, Winter.

6 Slater (1980, 163) argues that the movement of land from a rentier class to white farmers occurred primarily in the early twentieth century. My evidence suggests that this process was gathering pace already in the 1890s. An examination of the increase in settler lands under maize cultivation shows, for example, significant increases between 1875 and 1880, 1895 and 1900 and 1900 to 1905 (Ballard and Lenta, 1985, 127).

7 MSCE 2104/1917, Estate of Jeffery Mophew: *Howick Herald* 7 August 1985.

agent to marry two of the Taylor sisters whom they met as they arrived in Durban and married within a month (Smith interview, 1992). More often than not, geography had a lot to do with the phenomenon. In remote areas where there were few families, marriages between families were logical. Familiarity made them feasible and considerations of economy fanned them. In the remote and thinly populated Impendhle district, for example, the Allwright brothers, Laurie and William married the daughters of Laurens, a farmowner nearby (Morrell interview, 1992). Similarly the Alcock brothers of Bulwer, Fred and Len, married the Barton sisters (Daphne Pennefather interview, 1992). In the Richmond area, among the earliest settlers were the Nicholson brothers, John Duggleby and William, who arrived in Natal having recently married the sisters, Harriet and Florence Harrow from Hampshire (Gordon, 1988, 6). The pattern was followed by another prominent Richmond family, when John and J W T Marwick married the McIntosh sisters (Coulson, 1990, 200). Apart from geography, the consideration of wealth could lead families to joint marriage. The Mingay brothers, Herbert and Ernest, married the Wilkinson sisters. They had owned land in Edendale next to (or with (this is unclear)) the sister's brother, Walter. The Wilkinsons were blacksmiths and also traders and they moved into the Polela area at the same time as the Mingay brothers who bought farms, a hotel and store. Although there is no definite evidence, the facts suggest that the marriage facilitated accumulation by the Wilkinsons and the Mingays.⁸ When Agnes MacFarlane of the wealthy Ixopo farming family married William Foster in the early 1870s it brought together the two largest landowners in the Lufafa Road area (Agnes Pennefather interview, 1992).⁹

The attachment of the midland families to 'home' (ie the United Kingdom) was and remains one of their defining features. This was not an unambiguous phenomenon since tensions began to surface ever more powerfully between colonial and metropolitan affiliations (see chapters 4, 6). Yet even as a Natal or local midlands identity was forged, the attachment for home was scarcely reduced. Patrick McKenzie (grand nephew of Duncan McKenzie), growing up in Natal in the 1930s and 1940s was brought up to think that he was half Scottish and half Irish (Pat McKenzie interview, 1993). In the 1940s so successful had this practice been that a group photograph of taken at Pietermaritzburg's Royal Show showed that they were "still indistinguishable from their counterparts in the home counties" (Laband and Hasswell, 1988, 70).¹⁰

The connection with the British Isles was carefully fostered. Those who could afford it, continued to send their sons to prestigious public schools rather than the local ones (though this practice seems to have died by 1900). The Greenes went to Lancing, Hathorns to Malvern, Tatham's to Marlborough, Davis' to Loretto and Wycombe Abbey (Francis interview, 1992). Visits to Britain that seemed closer to pilgrimages were common. Architectural styles, interior decoration, the lay-out of gardens were all consciously cultivated to evoke the material conditions of metropolitan life (McCracken and McCracken, 1990).¹¹ And of course, the institutions discussed in this thesis bore the mark of their British counterparts strongly as well.

In some families the attachment to 'home' was idiosyncratic, some would say, eccentric. The Sinclair family at Dargle lived together on adjacent farms, spoke only Gaelic to one another, controlled their sheep with collie dogs, and never adopted the standard Natal farmer dress of

8 Phyllis Palfreman interview, 1992; MSCE 19211/1933, Estate of Richard Ernest Mingay; MSCE 9/361, Emilie Ingle Mingay (nee Wilkinson).

9 Intermarriage between ONFs was in fact very widespread and remained so into the 1970s (Loudon, 1970, 49). The extent of intermarriage may be gleaned from an examination of one of the many family histories of ONF families. The Speirs history, for example, reads like a who's who of the Midlands (Speirs, 1985).

10 The 1949 photograph includes the following ONF members: Colonel Hugh Richards DSO (Mool River), Priscilla Francis, Phyllis Otto, Natalie Campbell and Elizabeth Jonsson.

11 For a comparative view see Winer and Deetz (1990) who argue that in the Eastern Cape, the 1820 settlers borrowed selectively from British culture, "producing a cultural world consistent with the re-creation of an agrarian way of life" (55).

khaki. As Donald Sinclair put it, "Everything was done as it was in Scotland" (Sinclair interview, 1993). Among the McKenzies, Gaelic remained in use for some time. The story told to illustrate this is of an Indian labourer lost in mist at Nottingham Road. Seeing a figure before him, he enquired his way, first in English, then in Zulu. When he received no response he tried in Gaelic and received an immediate reply! Another family tale to the same effect was narrated to me by Patrick McKenzie: "The McKenzies speak to Zulus in Zulu, to Indians in Indian and they make a damned good attempt at English as well" (Patrick McKenzie, 1993).

Another family of Scottish origin, the Smythes of Nottingham Road, also operated as a clan. As Pat Smythe recalls for the late 1910s and early 1920s, "Family ties were tight - maybe it was a Scottish clan thing, but it was real" (Smythe interview, 1993). Smythe married Margaret King in 1876. Daughter of one of the first Nottingham Road farmers, she was beautiful, but "socially below him" (Reed interview, 1993). Smythe himself gave the reasons for marrying her: she would "make me an excellent wife, she is so good and cheerful, makes the best of everything, and I know she will be the greatest assistance to me in farming, she knows so much about stock and is a much better judge than most of the farmers about here and certainly far better than I am" (Child, 1973, 71). Margaret worked tirelessly on the farm, bore 14, and brought up 12 children. At Christmas, up to fifty members of the extended family would gather at the family farm, 'Strathearn'. Initially, these events were organised by Margaret, but later when she was old enough, the eldest daughter, Euphemia 'Effie' Janet took over. Margaret ceased accompanying Charles to public functions and here too, Effie took over (Gordon, 1988, 30). Given that Smythe was a prominent public figure (Prime Minister in 1905-1906) this was a source of gossip. Long before Margaret died (in 1924) Effie was playing the leading role in family affairs. She wrote a newssheet which included news of the Smythes and district gossip and sent it to family members as far afield as Scotland. She never married yet became effective head of the family because she was the oldest, clever and powerful. She was impervious to criticism and had 'a very strong character'. Asked why she never married, she is reputed to have said, "I have never found a man good enough to be the father of my children" (Reed interview, 1993).

The development of family identity went hand in hand with close working relationships within families. Large families, particularly those with many sons, were often the site of close economic co-operation. The custom was for each son to have a farm, and in many instances (for example, the Smythes, Nicholsons, Moors) these were close to, or bordering on one another. Depending on the agricultural activity pursued, machinery, labour, collective buying and marketing, financing and technical expertise was shared (Agnes Pennefather interview, 1992; Barbara McKenzie interview, 1993). Similarly, assistance was provided by fathers to sons and vice versa.¹² More distant family could also be called upon for support. When Otto Solomon was setting up his farm at Otto's Bluff he hired land from his great aunt (Solomon interview, 1992).

It was exceptionally difficult to operate economically, or to survive socially, without a family (nuclear or extended). To be inserted into the midland community required family location. Being single was thus frowned upon. Unmarried sons and daughters were not favoured in wills. On the death of a spouse both widow and widower preferred to remarry. When Captain Andrew Green was killed in the First World war, his wife (without a local extended family) found it impossible to survive and in a short while, married the Maritzburg College teacher, Oberle (Andrew Green interview, 1992). This need could be avoided if one had extended family: when the youngest McKenzie brother, John, died in 1894 while transport riding in the Transvaal, his two children were taken in by his brother Peter at Himeville. His wife, daughter

12 A particularly successful example of this was Joseph Baynes, his brother Richard and father William who constantly assisted one another. "Father would sell to son, brother would sell to brother" (Pearse, 1981, 29).

of prominent Nottingham Road farmer Joseph Raw, either went to live with her parents or her brother-in-law, Duncan. In 1905 she married one of Charles Smythe's sons, David. Her story is one of being comfortably spliced into three of the largest and most influential families in the midlands.¹³ When husbands lost their wives (frequently in childbirth) the tendency was to remarry soon afterwards. This was the case of W J Fly and of Herbert Mingay.

Section 2 Women in the Family

In previous chapters women have been discussed in terms of their loyalty to husband and the family name (chapter 4) and in terms of their participation in public affairs (chapter 7). In this section, we see them in their family contexts. In the process issue is taken with some generalised statements about families being institutions of female exploitation.

"In so far as women's work and experience has been entered into it ('the universe of ideas'), it has been on terms decided by men and because it has been approved by men" (Smith, 1989, 4). It is furthermore frequently argued by some feminists that the family is the location of direct male power over women; her body, her time, her reproductive capacity, her ability to work. Within the family, it is argued, wives are hidden from history, excluded from the public realm and confined to a private prison where their labour is under-rated and unpaid, where their lives are lived at the whim of men and in the service of men (cf Delphy and Leonard, 1992).¹⁴ Instrumental and conspiratorial views of men in the family, deny female agency and ignore class and racial factors. Such representations, furthermore, do not accord with the place and history of women in ONF families which is unfolded below.

Women in the midlands have not been silent - there are many diaries and books (Gordon, 1970; Gordon, 1988) which testify to their vocality. This is in accord with trends elsewhere, where educated middle-class women made their worlds, and spoke of them (Le Guin, 1990). Their voices were seldom strident or public. It was only in such rare cases as that of the Colenso sisters that women took public positions, spoke out forcefully and refused to fit patriarchal prescriptions of feminine deportment. But even here, shelter was sometimes sought behind a *nom de plume* (Wylde, 1994).¹⁵

If one approached the women of the midland families with the intention of finding the subaltern, no doubt one would find evidence of rebellion, protest and subversion. Such popular projects often invoke woman as always dominated by men, always struggling against the bonds of subjugation. But this is not essential woman. There is no essential woman. Women acquire, demonstrate, are enslaved by, a range of feminine identities in the same way as men display and are located by and in different masculinities.¹⁶ In this section, the focus will be on the women of the midland families, those people who are mentioned in wills, who appear in official documents and minutes of meetings. We will be looking at the audible and visible women of the midlands. But were these women representative of the wives and daughters of

13 MSCE 24/182, Estate of Fanny Tanner Smythe.

14 Dissenting views come from third world and black feminists. Hazel Carby, for example, argues that for exploited and culturally alienated minorities, the family was a site of resistance and solidarity (Carby, 1982).

15 There has been little research on white colonial women in Natal. A major exception is the current research work of Julie Parle (1995). An earlier and important work was by Jo Beall (1982) which produced an overview of the position of women (black and white) in Natal. Unlike Parle's work, however, this was based largely on official sources and was more concerned with economic indexes than the cultural aspect of women's lives.

16 There is a vast feminist literature which debates essentialism, see for example, Barrett and Phillips, 1992; Butler, 1990; Butler, 1993; Fuss, 1991.

the midland families, the grandmothers, aunts and nieces? My impression is that by and large they were. An examination of more than one hundred deceased estates reveals that women were not neglected in wills and were active themselves in producing testamentary documents. In some spheres they were treated unequally, but they were not ignored. And in interviews with women, I did not get the impression that I was dealing with a downtrodden class. The women I spoke to were proud of being ONF, forceful, opinionated, spunky. As Ruth Pennington (born in 1898) put it, the women and girls of the midlands were all 'individuals'. "They had a strong sense of themselves and DID things" (Pennington interview, 1992). My informants put this down partly to their attendance at elite schools. Girls were taught to be individuals. Nancy Oglvie remembers that her education in Pietermaritzburg in the late 1900s and early 1910s emphasised sexual equality. Marching and sports were stressed, and there was a robust and energetic attitude to life (Oglvie interview, 1992).

On only one sad occasion did I hear a different story. Madge Ireland was 96 when, in 1992, I interviewed her in a Pietermaritzburg old age home. She told me she was the second oldest of eight children born to wagon-maker, Benjamin Ireland. The family lived in West Street, Pietermaritzburg. Her mother was home-bound, uninvolved in her husband's business and with little role in her children's education. She ran the home and, with the help of an aged African woman who lived with them for many years, ensured that the family unit functioned efficiently. This involved having family lunch everyday - Benjamin being able to attend because his business was nearby. Madge went to school at the Convent, but did not enjoy it. "I wasn't too strong" she said. She got sick often and didn't enjoy sports. She had a few close friends who visited her at home, but she was solitary in her habits, enjoying needlework, and card games such as patience (solitaire).

After finishing school Madge worked as a governess on farms in Estcourt and Mooi River. She had no formal training, but a sister who worked at Merchiston gave her tips. She hated the life. "Estcourt was too cold and lonely" she said. After a few years she returned to Pietermaritzburg "to help mother" (Ireland interview, 1992).

Madge never married. When I interviewed her, she was aware of a brother alive somewhere in Natal, but she had no sense of family place or of family support. Midway through my prepared list of questions, she said to me, "Haven't I told you enough?". I left her then, a lonely, sad woman who felt her story not to be worth telling.

Madge was not a 'farm girl', nor was she ONF. And she was single. In effect, she had no family to provide networks or a social base or to give her the identity which could be translated into resources and opportunities. She is not representative of the resourceful women of the midland farming families who put their families first, who considered it their duty to serve the family, whose joys were obtained in the achievements of family. The version of their history which they want recorded is that which Ruth Gordon found in the diaries of Ellen McLeod, Byrne settler whose family "clung to the soil through almost intolerable hardships, winning through to happiness and eventual prosperity" (Gordon, 1970, 1). In this section, it is the voices of these women, that I shall be listening to, and interpreting.

The basis for the confidence and satisfaction of ONF women lay in their place within the family. Michael Gilding, in his study of the Australian family in a similar period, argues that women had little option than to marry or go into domestic service. He states, furthermore, that other options which allowed women independent choices rested on access to independent money which few women enjoyed (Gilding, 1991, 49). In some respects, this was true for Natal though domestic service was seldom an option, being the domain of black men and women. But many ONF women did have money (even if they did not inherit it or gain access to it until they were

well into adulthood). This is evidenced by the fact that many women did not marry (Beall, 1982, 117). Though most ONF women did marry, this was scarcely an indication of women in thrall to existing marriage customs. Why did women, by and large voluntarily, put themselves into a social institution in which their legal rights would be limited and their status within that institution circumscribed and hierarchically below that of the husband? Let me offer just two answers: Anthony Giddens's examination of intimacy provides one possible answer. In the nineteenth century, he argues, romantic love succeeded arranged marriages. In Natal arranged marriages (often between pairs of siblings (see section 1)) were quite common. By the 1880s arranged marriages were less common and by the twentieth century very rare. Romantic love began to form the basis of social and sexual engagement (resulting often in marriage).

Romantic or passionate love worked more powerfully as a way of organising their lives and dreams for women than men. It kept them in the 'home' (itself a new concept which brought ideas of family, abode, children, sex and security together) where the changing relationship between parents and children affirmed the growing status of motherhood. "With the division of spheres (into work and home) ... the fostering of love became predominantly the task of women. Ideas about romantic love were plainly allied to women's subordination in the home, and her relative separation from the outside world. But the development of such ideas was also an expression of women's power, a contradictory assertion of autonomy in the face of deprivation" (Giddens, 1992, 42). It was in the context of the family that romantic love was expressed, providing "for a long-term life trajectory, oriented to an anticipated yet malleable future; and it creates a 'shared history' that helps separate out the marital relationship from other aspects of family organisation and give it a special primacy" (Giddens, 1992, 45).¹⁷

Another reason for women entering marriage and the family was to be found in their position within it. Women were dominant in certain areas of family life which were ceded to them by the husband, sometimes grudgingly, sometimes willingly. In a different context, Sean Field aptly describes this dominance as still being "defined and restricted within a patriarchal set of beliefs and practices" (Field, 1991, 61). Talking about coloured working class families in the western Cape, he continues: the general powerlessness of these women in wider society is "partially overcome by their ability to control and implement the bulk of the household's practical, nurturing and moral tasks. However, these women do not have sufficient tangible power and space to explore and realise their own desires, wants, needs and interests. At the level of appearances, these families do constitute a departure from the stereotypical patriarchal model, but at the deeper level of personal power relations, these homes are still rooted within a patriarchal framework" (Field, 1991, 61). Here there is a major difference, because the ONFs provided their female members WITH power and influence in wider society. By virtue of being ONF, women had power over black people, but they also had the confidence and resources to be purposive agents in wider society. ONF women vested themselves fully in the family, protecting it, propagating it, as though their very lives depended upon it.¹⁸

Between 1880 and 1920 the role of women in the family changed in two important respects. Their involvement in farm production became less significant but their opportunities to find employment beyond the farm improved. Secondly, as the importance of social life (an integral aspect of making the ONF network function) increased, so women's responsibilities increased.

17 The argument that women had reason to vest themselves in the family is picked up by Anne McClintock (1995), who argues that women were powerful within the private domain of the family.

18 It has been argued that an explanation for the phenomenon of women defending the family may be found in protecting the household from the intrusion of capitalist forces which erode the private sphere, in so doing, endangering the zones of power and influence which women enjoyed within it (Bozzoli, 1983, 160).

When the settlers first began farming operations, women shared the labour. This involved actual manual labour, but also drew on their agricultural knowledge. Fanny and Harriet, wives of the Nicholson brothers, shared the manual labour with their husbands when they set up their farms in Richmond in the 1850s. In Nottingham Road, husband and wife, and children of the King family shared the manual labour because local African labour was not available (Gordon, 1988, 10, 29). Many wives actually knew a lot more about farming than did their husbands and were thus indispensable to farming operations. Charles Smythe openly acknowledged this and he was not an exception (Morrell interview, 1992). Daughters of the midland families who grew up on the farms knew a lot about farming and when they married eligible British emigrants they were frequently in a situation of expertise in relation to the production-side of farming (Taylor interview, 1992).

In the early days, when the returns from farming were minimal and transport-riding or some other non-agricultural pursuit brought in the bulk of income, women were frequently left in charge of farms. Duncan McKenzie's mother frequently looked after the family farms when her sons and husband were away. She had the Zulu nickname, **Umfazi N'doda** (A woman who was a man) (McKenzie, n/d, 8).

Women quite often farmed alone as a result of the death of their husbands. In some cases this was brute necessity (Gordon, 1988, 3) but in other cases, it was a choice. When P D Simmons died, his wife Maud, continued with the farming operations. She chose not to remarry and managed to "scratch a living" with the advice of her friend and neighbour, George Richards, and the assistance of a farm apprentice. She farmed with pedigree shorthorn and thoroughbred horses, showing and winning prizes at the Royal Show (Taylor interview, 1992).

It remained true for the whole of this period that many of the farms run by the midland families could not be run efficiently without the support of the wife. For some twenty years (from 1900 onward) Aubrey Jonsson farmed at Mool River, on the 2500 acre farm 'Dartington'. When his wife died, he found he could not continue and sold up, moving to a smaller farm much closer to Pietermaritzburg (Jonsson interview, 1992).

It was, however, the exception rather than the rule, that women farmed alone or took an equal or major share of responsibility in farming.¹⁹ Increasingly, their role on the farm was defined in narrower terms. They were given responsibility for vegetable gardens (generally for domestic consumption) and poultry (pin money and domestic production). In some families women retained an interest and influence in dairying, but this changed as well. The trend in Europe was for the dairy industry to be masculinised. In the nineteenth century, dairy work was generally done by women. By the early twentieth century the work had been taken over by men, partly as a consequence of mechanization and the spread of single-sex agricultural colleges but also as a result of changing gender discourses around 'women's work' (Bourke, 1990; Sommestad, 1994).

The importance of women's contribution to production varied from family to family. In the bigger, more prosperous families, they were financially insignificant. In the smaller families, or in families that were experiencing hard times, these activities could be vital for liquidity.²⁰ It was quite common (and again a consequence of the widespread tendency of giving daughters a secondary education) for wives to undertake the bookkeeping of farming operations. This became steadily more important as farming became more commercial. In the Smith family in

19 In 1891 58 women were recorded as farmers in their own right (Beall, 1982, 120).

20 My findings here are born out in comparative studies of mid to late nineteenth century American society. Mary Ryan, for example, concludes that in the rural family, the function of the housewife regarding boarders, could be critical, giving her as much economic importance as the man - "the housewife continued to command important material resources" (Ryan, 1981, 231).

Creighton, for example, the custom of the wife doing the books was into its third generation in 1992 (Smith interview, 1992). Taking in boarders was another way of helping to tide a family through hard times, but this was only viable close to towns and so most families could not depend on it. But it was not uncommon for a member of the extended family (often the sister of the farmer's wife) to be set up in Pietermaritzburg to run a boarding house which provided not only a job for the sister, but also a place for family members to stay when visiting the town. This was utilized heavily by families unable to afford the heavy costs of boarding school - children went to school in Pietermaritzburg as day pupils and stayed in the boarding house of the extended family member (Daphne Pennefather interview, 1992).

Another fairly common practice was for wives to run farm schools. Phillipa Smythe, wife of Charles John's son, David, lived on the farm 'Dalcruie'. David was a poor farmer and they were consequently not well off. Phillipa was the driving force in the family; her husband was sweet-natured, well-liked but not forceful. In 1922 in order to make ends meet, Phillipa started a farm school. The venture was a major success: in 1942, it included 4 teachers and 50 boarding pupils. Phillipa made all the decisions about the school and indeed, even some about family matters (Reed interview, 1993).

The realm of teaching and clerical work widened as professional outlets for women during this period. From the 1870s onward the establishment of schools, especially in Pietermaritzburg, provided job opportunities for young women. From 1891, training in nursing was available at Grey's Hospital in Pietermaritzburg (Rose, 1988, 183). Initially British immigrants rather than local women took up these options.²¹ It is not clear why there was a dearth of volunteers. Popular magazines like the Natal Mercury Pictorial urged young, single women to enter the professions (Beall, 1982, 128). One of the reasons, suggested by Shula Marks, was the morally threatening prospect of white 'ladies' having to nurse black men. This, it was felt, might prejudice their "purity of mind" (Marks, 1994, 50). Another reason was poor working conditions and low levels of pay. In the rural areas, the demand for governesses or tutors persisted into the 1920s. These posts initially were filled primarily by landless men or spinsters.²² Later, young girls with a secondary schooling were preferred. As was the case for boys, so it was for girls that an education in one of the 'good' schools - St Anne's (Hilton), Collegiate, Epworth, St John's (Pietermaritzburg) and St Mary's (Richmond) - became a criterion for ONF status. Since the single-sex girls schools employed mostly female teachers, attractive jobs became available particularly in the twentieth century.

Particularly after the First World war, a host of farm girls went into teaching and nursing, notably the two daughters of James Marwick (nephew to J W Marwick of Richmond) (Gordon, 1988, 124-126).²³ In the family of Theophilus St George, Natal civil servant and, at the end of his career, master of the Supreme Court, the entry of women into nursing and teaching in this period was astonishing. While three of the five sons went into farming, all five daughters went into nursing or teaching. Nancy, the eldest, wanted to be a governess on a farm but her mother insisted on her attending the Natal Teachers College in Pietermaritzburg. She did so in 1917-19. She then taught at schools in Greytown and Durban (Ogilvie interview, 1992).

21 Vietzen, 1973, 198-201. See also, for example, ED 1/1/2, Council of Education Minutes, 28 December 1988, 3 and 31 January 1989, 5.

22 Colin Bundy's (1986) examination of poor whiteness in the eastern Cape in the nineteenth century begins with the observation that many white men, down on their luck, were employed as tutors by farmers. It is not clear whether the Natal appointees were as inappropriate as Bonaparte Blenkins, Olive Schreiner's character from *The Story of an African Farm*, but I have some evidence for the calibre of male 'teachers' working alone or for small institutions in the mid to late nineteenth century. See the account of Robert Mason of the education he received in a small private school in Pietermaritzburg. His description of "Paddy F." is of a man with a permanent hangover who constantly took his bad temper out on the small children (1960?, 2).

23 Teaching was the preferred occupation, but in the 1920s and 1930s, on leaving school more young girls began training in nursing. Two of Daphne's Alcock's older sisters, for example, became nurses (Daphne Pennefather interview, 1992).

These professions gave single women some economic independence, but more than this, they were socially respectable.²⁴ This had not always been the case. Remembering the first decade of the twentieth century, Ruth Pennington, recounted this anecdote: her sister wanted to be an architect but her mother said "No, it wasn't done" (Pennington interview, 1992). By 1920, however, things had changed. Teaching was considered a good occupation, even though very few women at this time obtained a tertiary education. Teachers, furthermore, were considered to be good wives, and many a farmer in the twentieth century married a woman with educational qualifications (Daphne Pennefather interview, 1992). While a job was more readily available, it remained true that 'first prize' was marriage. Most fathers insisted on it, or at least encouraged it. S B Woollatt, principal veterinary surgeon of Natal and midland farmer believed that his daughters should "stay on the farm" until they got married (Barbara McKenzie interview, 1993). Mothers on the other hand, hoped their daughters would marry well, or to use Ruth Pennington's mother's expression, "would marry a count" and fashioned their daughters' educations to this end (Pennington interview, 1992).

Another change, just as important, also occurred during this period. Between 1880 and 1920 the women's role and place in the family underwent transformation: they became responsible for the social engagements of the family and thereby, for its prestige. In the process, they became ladies.

The family home became increasingly important throughout this period. In terms of architecture, houses were expanded, and gentrified. Gardens were laid out, in the case of those who could afford them, with English trees and shrubs like elm and hyacinth. Houses could accommodate many visitors and became the location for parties - tennis and croquet, dinner and luncheon functions. ONF women were absolutely indispensable to this development and this gave them considerable influence and importance. As Michael Gilding puts it for colonial Australia "[s]uch social duties promoted the cohesiveness and organisation of the colonial elite" (Gilding, 1991, 51). This development was part of a transition described earlier as the move from private to public patriarchy (Hearn, 1992). Women were now prominent in representing the family and far from being invisible.²⁵ Making a home to be proud of in adverse conditions conferred status from family and community (Strobel, 1987, 381).

Becoming a lady involved acquiring a 'good' education. During the period under discussion it became automatic for girls to be sent to school (as detailed chapter 3) and for those who could afford it, to finishing school in Europe (Pennington interview, 1992). Apart from being educated, speaking properly, dressing well, and knowing how to dance, play the piano and other popular leisure time activities, ladies also had to manage the household economy. They were not expected to do the work themselves, but were generally charged with commanding the establishment of domestic servants.

While the social role of women in the family changed, expectations of biological reproduction (by husband and wife alike) remained a central concern. In Europe, family sizes were declining (Wrigley, 1978, 151). In Natal, large families with eight or more children were common in the nineteenth century but decreasingly so in the twentieth. In Australia, from the 1870s onward, birthrates dropped and abortion rates rose, as women began to practice birth control (Gilding, 1991, 67, 70). There are a number of possible reasons for declining fertility. Amongst those that specifically refer to women are the following: numerous children strained the household

24 Shula Marks notes that there was much argument over what was socially respectable in terms of class and race values. The dilemma of white women handling black (especially male) bodies, vigorously exercised the colonial mind through the period under discussion (Marks, 1994).

25 It should be noted that this trend differed strongly from urban developments where during the mid nineteenth century, the middle-class home was becoming a place of privacy, work was being conducted beyond the home and women were becoming invisible (see Davidoff and Hall, 1987).

budget and women, having responsibility for that budget, responded by limiting their fertility; women began to define their role not just as mothers but as carers of children who required special attention (and were now considered as more than just potential carriers of the family name or as social security for old age) (Stone, 1981, 74; Davidoff and Hall, 1987, 343).

Up to the 1850s there prevailed an understanding that a child was an immature adult to be used to the economic advantage of the parents. In mid-century, this changed such that the child was no longer expected to earn for the parents. The reverse occurred and "parents cheerfully made a heavy economic and emotional investment in their children in order to launch them successfully into the world, with little or no expectation of return in their old age, except in terms of psychic satisfaction. Not surprisingly, it was among the bourgeoisie and landed elite, where economic transfers between parents and children had always been downward, that this great emotional shift was first experienced" (Stone, 1981, 74). The emphasis on child as child, led to development of woman's specialisation in child-minding, leaving economic production increasingly to men. This transition can be expressed another way: from the 1850s there was a shift "from patriarchal authority to domestic affection. by the 1850s the father's authority had been dissolved in paeans to loving domesticity. ... This veneration of motherhood was more substantial than the waft of sentimentality that blew through nineteenth-century culture. It signaled a new and important family function. Most directly, mother love was the lynchpin in a new method of socializing children. A mother's tender ministrations were actually a substitute for patriarchal will-breaking" (Ryan, 1981, 231-2).

The changes indicated above were evident in Natal. "Colonial parents were beginning in the 'eighties to make less exacting demands on their children, to insist less on 'moral deportment' and to allow them to discover recreation for themselves" (Hattersley, 1940, 177-178). Schools were taking over the tasks of inculcating good values and teaching manners. But at an earlier stage of child-rearing, mothers were being forced, at the turn of the century, to re-evaluate the well-established tradition of letting African 'nannies' take the major responsibility of child-care. In a 1906 text, Dr A L Robinson admonished settler mothers. "The practice of handing over baby and 'comforter' to a small native nurseboy or a dusky maid-of-all-work during the busy hours of the day cannot be too strongly condemned" (quoted in Dyer, 1990, 68).²⁶ On the farm, it appears as though little heed was paid to such warnings, but this did not detract from a situation where women were having to take on increasingly complex managerial functions in the household. Looking after the children, with all that entailed, plus social occasions and guests were time consuming tasks. In addition to these, most women were also involved in budgeting. In a persuasive article, Ann Whitehead (1984) has argued that in the area of income distribution in the household, women were subjected to an additional burden, having to sublimate their own needs and desires in order first to meet those of husband and children. In addition, argues Whitehead, women's earnings were frequently swallowed up in the household budget. She concludes that insofar as running the household went, the home was not a place of female autonomy. A similar finding is made by Elizabeth Fox-Genovese (1988), who examined the position of gentlewomen in the plantation economy of the American South. She concluded that white women were ultimately dependent upon white men. More than this, they were controlled by their husbands. In the sphere of production, some scholars come to similar conclusions. Participation in production did not necessarily confer decision-making power or influence. Women who participated in production generally had no control over the resources central to the running of the household and therefore were effectively powerless (Ditz, 1986, 127). On the other hand, it is observed that women were important in household production and since household harmony and productivity could be damaged if they did not co-operate, they enjoyed some power by virtue of this. The evidence at my disposal reveals both these

26 This warning was repeated throughout the empire (Stoler, 1989, 650).

trends. Take the case of Barbara McKenzie (nee Woollatt), for example, who was involved in her father's cheese factory. She did the books and in the late 1920s even had responsibility for the day-to-day running of the factory. Yet her father always had the final say and she was never permitted to work with the cattle (Barbara McKenzie interview, 1993). Similarly, in the Smith household at Creighton, female supervision of finances did not give women control over decision-making. As Raymond Smith put it, "The women saved the money and the men spent it" (Smith interview, 1992).

In the next section, attention will be paid to how ONF women became part of an inheritance chain which transferred wealth across generations. In this process they gained access to independent means which gave them room for initiative and manoeuvre. Apart from inheritance, many wives who were ONF in their own right, had the capacity to borrow money and enact schemes on their own. Owen Solomon's wife, for example, decided that she wanted a new house. She owned the farm and, in 1926, she used it as security to borrow £2000. To pay the amount back, she ran fowls, pigs and took in paying guests (Solomon interview, 1992).

One cannot make an assessment of women in the family, only by measuring their power vis à vis their fathers or husbands in the economic spheres of production, distribution and consumption. There are other important factors to be taken into account. Firstly, many women had resources and skills of their own.²⁷ Secondly, much of women's power was in the area of culture, leisure time use and the conspicuous display of class and racial identity. Thirdly, as I have already argued, men needed wives to make families. The family unit needed husband and wife. The dependence was mutual.

With the family being an institution of such great importance it is not surprising to find unmarried women remaining, where possible, within the family.²⁸ They sometimes commanded places of social importance. The Nicholson spinsters, for example, kept the two branches of the family (at Richmond and Underberg) together by hosting family get-togethers. They virtually functioned as dynastic patriarchs (Nicholson interview, 1992). More commonly, unmarried women occupied positions of stability and security but with little prospect or status. In such circumstances, they were given the tasks of assisting the aged or infirm and of helping with the household. In the house of Thomas William Gold (b 1889), (eleventh child of William Gold of Ixopo) this was the reality.²⁹ An elder sister, Georgina, was a widow with limited independent means and little independent earning capacity. She kept house for Thomas, a bachelor. She did not enjoy the lonely life with her brother, particularly as he was disturbed. His death in 1926 was by suicide. In answer to a question in the hearing concerning a family dispute over his estate, she said: "I did want to leave him, I wished to obtain the position of housekeeper else where. I wanted to be independent My brother asked me not to leave him so long as he was a bachelor and he promised to pay me for housekeeping." "In addition to being Thomas' housekeeper I was also his companion and I did many personal things for him such as mending his clothes."³⁰

27 Here I take issue with the view that sees white colonial women as 'incorporated wives' (Gartrell, 1984). In the Indian context, the argument is made that wives's identities were derived from their husbands, that their social identities were subsumed under theirs. As Karen Hansen has argued, women had many identities and were not solely dependent on their husbands either for status or life opportunity (Hansen, 1991, 264).

28 I do not have figures for the percentage of women who never married. In 1891, of white females over 16 years of age, 56% were married, 39% unmarried, and 8% widowed or divorced (Beall, 1982, 212).

29 MSCE 6171/1921, Estate of William Gold.

30 MSCE 11824/1926, Estate of Thomas William Gold, transcript of an examination in the Magistrate's Court, Ixopo, n/d. For a full and tragic account of this, see Christison, 1986, 69. His suicide note read, "My honour is worth more than my life".

The transformation of ONF women to ladies was assisted by public portrayal. Women were revered, becoming symbols of purity. In the South African war, for example, the MC school magazine paid tribute to the women.

No one will ever be able to calculate all that Natal women have suffered and done during the last twelve months, for much of it was in secret, but there is evidence enough in the number of ladies' committees enrolled all over the Colony, and the amount of good work they accomplished, for the sick and wounded and for the thousands of refugees ruthlessly driven across our borders, that their charity and self-abnegation knew no limit. (*Pietermaritzburg College Magazine*, 1, 5, December 1900, 6.)

In terms of this quote, it is easy to see why Jo Beall comes to the conclusion that "white women were to be the symbols of the authority and superiority of the white ruling class. They were urged to maintain their purity, morality and domesticity and were discouraged from thinking or, at least, from expressing their views" (Beall, 1982, 134). And Ann Stoler comes to similar conclusion, though she holds white men responsible because they "positioned European women as the bearers of a redefined colonial morality" (Stoler, 1989, 640). But the situation was more complex than that. The white women had not just had the status of 'lady' thrust upon them. They accepted it enthusiastically as testimony of the enduring influence of 'home' and their success in preserving their class position in the face of adversity. A wife rooted in a farming family had three reputations to defend; her own, her family's and that of her class. In a fascinating letter signed from 'Wife of Walter J. Slatter' this reputation is stoutly defended.

Pardon my troubling you with what may appear as trivial a case but which I as representative of the Grey Town wives look upon my self to use as a test case - it is a known fact that on a farm the mistress employs the native girls and if necessary punishes them if she see fit with the consent of their fathers. Never have I had any trouble until last week, when TWO OF MY GIRLS WENT TO COURT AND COMPLAINED of me. I had taken them into my home - beaten them about the head and face." This is absolutely untrue - every word - what happened was this: I returned from Grey Town - saw neglect of duty, not feeling well pushed our girl away and scolded her.

This is the first time a mistress in my position has been summoned to court. - it being deemed sufficient that the master should do this. I maintain that if this is adhered to women will not appear and the case be dis (illegible) and false witness (?) be condoned . If Mr Fannin had been here no servant of mine would have done such a thing and more over for this made up late of utter falsehood a reprimand would have been given to them they would never have forgotten. ... a wholesome dread of the magistrate would obviate all these petty annoyances to which we future mistresses will be subjected.

Mrs. Slatter concluded by apologising for writing but said "how deeply I feel being made to appear in a court full of native police and other natives - when my husband could be asked to be allowed to save me this. - and no satisfaction obtained in any shape or form - but being lowered (in) my servants eyes".³¹

Thus far I have been treating ONF women basically in a undifferentiated way. There were, however, significant divisions amongst them. Initially, they came from widely differing class backgrounds. Another important difference was that the early settlers developed a type of rough frontier femininity which was superseded by more genteel femininities. To use Connell's distinction, the frontier femininity, which I describe below, was overtaken by an 'emphasized

31 AGO 1/8/75 635 /A. "Wife of Walter J Slatter" to H Bale (Attorney General) 17 December 1900.

femininity', which prevailed because other femininities, for example, those of madwomen, maiden aunts, prostitutes, midwives and witches, were kept out of the media and the public eye (Connell, 1987, 188). A femininity shaped around the midland lady emerged as the primary femininity. It included aspects of frontier femininity which derived from the ongoing relatedness (if not direct involvement) of farm wives to agricultural production. The emphasized femininity was fluid taking different forms in different places and at different times and requires a study of its own for proper sense to be made of it.

Women on the midland farms, particularly those who settled in the early period and who were forced to share hardship and labour, with little time or energy to be given to notions of social station and grandeur, developed a strong sense of independence, which went along with a dislike for social pretense and the valuing of qualities of tenacity and toughness. At the other end of the scale were the later arrivals, women who expected to be mistresses of well-appointed households with servants and a strict regime of meal-times, child upbringing and a generous schedule of social engagements. Life on a farm forced some compromise in an upper-middle class model which had the ring of the Raj as well as of London to it. Distance and the nature of the transport network meant that social occasions were not so grand or frequent as some wives would have wanted. The lack of proficiency in Zulu meant that the kitchen staff could not be trained to a standard expected. (Many families thus employed Indian menservants to overcome this problem.) But nor could the hardy frontier model of femininity survive intact either. As the midland community was moulded, so accommodation was made to the demands of femininity which emanated from Pietermaritzburg and more distantly from the metropole. New responsibilities centring on house and family were given to women. In the social institutions that developed, wives increasingly were expected to undertake tasks of catering and support derived from naturalised notions of the female role. Women were also expected to be sociable, to play tennis, bridge, or the piano. They were expected, and expected themselves, to look good at public functions. They were also naturally expected to support their husbands and promote the family name.

One of the most colourful of the early settlers was Sarah Jane Bryant. Her father, a ship's captain, died when she was ten (c 1840). At an early age she was driving wagons and working with Zulu men. She was one of the first settlers in Greytown in the 1850s and started the Commercial Hotel there c 1860. She eventually married a local farmer, Henry Plant. She was known for her strong will and independence. She had a "fiery temper, sharp tongue and managing nature" and was a "dragon of a mother-in-law" (Gordon, 1988, 20). Less extreme was the more private Margaret Smythe. Her lack of public visibility has already been mentioned, but in her way she continued the version of femininity which made little concession to nicety - she was an excellent shot and good farmer as well as being a very busy mother (Gordon, 1988, 30).

These women may have been the minority, but they were not exceptions. In the McKenzie family, there was a tradition of very confident, independent and strong women. Pat McKenzie described them as "liberated". In about 1890 Donald, the eldest of Duncan Snr's sons, married his cousin, Margaret Thomson, who was twenty years his junior. She spent her honeymoon travelling to Giant's Castle, Barberton and Lourenco Marques, and on arriving back in Durban, had a miscarriage on the wharf. She could drive a carriage and four (horses). Margaret Campbell McKenzie (one of Duncan jnr's daughters) never married. She farmed and was called **Nkosaan** by local Africans. Duncan's eldest daughter was a nurse. Another daughter drove ammunition trucks and ambulances in Flanders during the First World war (Pat McKenzie interview, 1993).

On the other side were the wives of the wealthy and the titled. Andrew Green who grew up in Mooi River remembers the wives of the district's elite (many of whom were, or had been, senior army officers) as being "very snooty" (Green interview, 1992). While these women made farm-wives conscious of their place, they also instilled in their children attitudes that were "terribly proper". Ruth Pennington describes these as "very Victorian", saying that it was unthinkable to have sex before marriage. Ruth herself admitted that she did not know (had not heard) swear words and accepted that any cosmetic like lipstick or powder was unbecoming of a young girl (Pennington interview, 1992).

Yet by the turn of the century, the gap between farm girls and wives with good breeding, was closing. Take the case of Dorothy Simmons for example. Daughter of wealthy farmer P D Simmons, she was born in 1897. She went as a boarder to Maris Stella school in Durban. Thereafter she went to finishing school in England. On her return she married, and with money left to her by her rich English aunts, bought the farm 'Stoney Hall'. She knew much more about farming than her husband and effectively ran it (Taylor interview, 1992).

There were a number of factors which promoted the development of a more inclusive, integrated femininity in the midlands. Prime amongst them was the developing education system and the custom of sending daughters to school at the single-sex boarding schools. Within the family too, a more standardized approach developed as parents consciously began to cast themselves as members of respectable middle-class, patrifocal institutions. In these families, girls were not just respected; they were expected to represent the family, to spread and honour the family name and, in return, were rewarded with a place of belonging and identity. This was not just nominal - as we shall see in the next section, daughters were generally treated well, if not always equally, in the distribution of family wealth at times of parental death. Remembering her own childhood, Agnes Foster of Ixopo, said that she had never felt disadvantaged. "I was treated the same as everybody" (Agnes Pennefather interview, 1994). And it was this treatment, and the importance of having a family belonging that allowed women who married into farming families, easily to take on the identity of that family, and in the process, to grant a secondary importance to their family of origin. Ruth Pennington's mother was Ethel Vanderplank, daughter of John Vanderplank, early Natal pioneer who owned vast tracts of land obtained from the Boer Republic before the British occupation of Natal (Morgans, n/d). Her mother first married Lawrence Frampton, a racehorse breeder and Greytown farmer. He died in 1900 and she remarried Arthur Hutchinson (Standard Bank manager in Greytown). Interestingly, Ruth constructed her identity around the two old farming families. She said that she considered "herself a Vanderplank, and very much a Pennington, never a Frampton." She went further to stress her loyalty and affiliation: "Penningtons were my life from the cradle really" (Pennington Interview, 1992).

A third factor was the development and expansion of farming. As arable farming expanded and labour forces grew, farming became more market oriented. In the early days it had been man and wife, side-by-side, against the elements, eking out an existence. By the late nineteenth century agriculture was more business-like with sons involved in the farming and wives more concerned with the sphere of social reproduction. Women played less of a role in production and so the strong, independent, manure-splattered depiction of women gave way to a more sedate and maternal image.

An impression which readers might have received from the foregoing, is that the family was a place of idyllic harmony, or at least of little conflict. This is unlikely to have been the case, and I attempt here to disrupt that image. Kura Taylor, wife of William Palframan of 'Watermead', Underberg shocked the district by leaving her husband after bearing him four children. She was a farm girl herself and had grown up in the district. Underberg had a harsh climate, was

socially isolated and the Palframans had difficulty in making ends meet. Kura was very frustrated, artistic and volatile. She left and went to New Zealand. It was not that William was an unkind or mean husband, it was just that the conditions were extremely harsh (Phyllis Palframan Interview, 1992).³² Phyllis (nee Mingay) had difficult memories about her parent's marriage. She spoke of her mother, Nancy Mate, who was born in Durban in 1902 and who married Wilfred Mingay (b. 1892). She had no say in farming operations but was queen of the home. The Mingays were well-off so she had no need to engage in money-making pursuits. She was involved in garden clubs, the Women's Institute and stock sales. She hosted tennis parties at 'Inglenook', the family farm. As Phyllis put it, "She flew the Mingay flag in the district". Though in general terms she was happy, Phyllis had some resentments. Her concluding comments were perhaps the most revealing and suggested that the 'resentments' might have been more serious: "But people didn't get divorced in those days, women had no other options."³³

What is so unusual about the Palframan testimony is that it breaches the blanket of silence usually cast over such matters. One has to dig deep into family history to find examples of the more volatile and tempestuous state of marriage. In the 1880s and 1890s, for example, the history of a bad marriage in Ixopo is recorded. It involved a drunken husband who beat his wife often. He eventually tried to kill her and then committed suicide (Christison, 1986, 35). Another tale is of Henry Gold (of Ixopo) trying to seduce his sister-in-law, while his wife was in labour! (Christison, 1986, 56).

While divorce was exceedingly rare, marital disharmony obviously existed. Novelist Julian Barnes captures the form that dissent could take:

The village women managed their husbands. They fed them, waited on them, cleaned and washed for them, deferred to them; they accepted men's interpretation of the world. In return, they got money, a roof, security, children and irreversible promotion in the hierarchy of the village. This seemed a good enough deal; and having got it, they patronized their husbands behind their backs, calling them children, talking of their little ways (Barnes, 1986, 77).

Living on a farm often entailed isolation and periods of loneliness. As Mary Ryan puts it isolation could "mire women in a world that was remote from the public spheres where men continued to wield power" (Ryan, 1981, 240-1). Life on a farm was also harsh, especially for women unused to it. Freely available domestic labour reduced the load, but some found the crudity of the environment and the need to keep a respectable house, almost intolerable burdens. Genteel women with resources of their own, like Florence Woollatt, thought Africa barbaric. They evaded the most testing challenges of home and children, by employing, in addition to African house servants, English nurses, and later governesses, to look after the children (Barbara McKenzie interview, 1992).

Beyond the confines of family, women could also feel alienated or excluded. Women often entered the social arena on the terms of men. While tennis clubs and a variety of other clubs which they established themselves operated as safe enclaves in which their own routines and rhythms predominated they were, as wives and daughters, also called upon or expected to participate in organisations dominated by men, for example the agricultural societies (see

32 It should be noted that neither of these cases of marital dysfunctionality belong, strictly speaking, within my period (since they both refer to the 1920s and 1930s) but in the absence of other evidence, which I put down to reticence rather than absence, I have cited it here.

33 The experiences of Ellen McIntosh (recounted through her letters to her sister Louisa) show that she was married to a vehement, domineering man, yet there is little in her letters which exposes her feelings about this. On the other hand, she leaves the reader in no doubt about the level of her devastation and grief when he died. Julie Parle's PhD thesis at the University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg is destined to reveal a great deal of what has hitherto been a poorly understood area. See her 1995 conference paper.

chapter 7). Indeed, it was not just that wives were expected by their husbands to assist in catering and in various other social roles, the wives themselves considered it part of **their** duty (as ladies) to involve themselves in their husbands' public activities. In a bizarre episode, the wives of certain prominent members of the Mool River Farmers Association appealed for the right to cater at shows and other agricultural functions. As early as 1908 P D Simmons unsuccessfully requested that the "Ladies of the District" be allowed to provide lunch on the day of the Christmas stock sale.³⁴ George Richards made a similar request in July 1914, again unsuccessfully.³⁵ The turbulence of war made the district's women more forceful. In August they had a meeting among themselves in order to raise funds for the war effort.³⁶ The winds of change appear to have had some effect. In July 1915, women were for the first time allowed to become members of the Mool River FA, though at the end of that year and in the following year they were still denied permission to cater at stock sales.³⁷

The behaviour of the Mool River FA committee in denying women the right to cater, must have been very galling when such tasks were routinely granted to women in other AS/FAs. In the Umvoti AS, for example, women were considered to be an indispensable part of the organisation. The as early as 1911 they had their own committee, were allowed to be full members and took the task of catering at all functions. Time and again, they were singled out for special praise at annual meetings. In 1912, the president noted that functions had netted £206. "The energy and enthusiasm displayed by the ladies ... was testified by the huge success ... and they deserved unstinted praise for their efforts to further the interests of the Society."³⁸ In 1916, the president spoke again on the issue: "I tender my sincere thanks for the enthusiastic and whole-hearted manner in which they have assisted the Society".³⁹ In sharp contrast to the fortunes of their counterparts in Mool River, the Umvoti women were given "control of the Refreshment Tent during the two days' Show".⁴⁰

In this section, I have demonstrated that women often had sources of independent income, or prospects thereof, and that their roles changed over time, placing them more in the home than in the sphere of production. Here they were generally in charge. Women had very strong ties to family which gave their lives stability and meaning. Yet as Stivens notes, the strength of their position within these extended families often confirmed their place within reproductive kinship relations which tended to limit their options and perpetuate male dominance (Stivens, 1984, 189-90). Be this as it may, struggles for women's rights elsewhere in South Africa, came about when the family was breaking down (du Toit, 1992). It seems therefore, that family provided more comfort than hardship and that where it remained strong, as in the midlands, there was little move to struggle collectively for gender equality.

34 KCM 24436, Mool River FA, minutes of a special committee meeting, 24 October 1908.

35 KCM 24436, Mool River FA, minutes of a fat stock show committee, 15 July 1914.

36 Mool River FA, minutes of a public meeting held at Mool River on 27 August 1914 for the purpose of deciding what steps should be taken to assist the homeland during the present crisis.

37 KCM 24436, Mool River FA, minutes of a special general meeting, 31 July 1915; committee meeting, 12 November 1915; committee meeting, 5 August 1916.

38 KCM 33659, Umvoti AS, minutes of annual general meeting, 23 October 1912.

39 KCM 33659, Umvoti AS, minutes of annual general meeting, 8 December 1916.

40 KCM 33659, Umvoti AS, executive committee meeting, 27 January 1917.

Section 3 Inheritance and the Generational Transfer of Wealth

The importance of a will for a family is clearly set out by Daniel Blake Smith:

The idea of the family was most strongly affirmed in the preparation of the last will and testament. Will writing was often a kind of summing up, an important, final opportunity for an individual to come to terms with his family, kin and friends, at least in an economic sense, and to pass on his accumulated material wealth and social status to the surviving generation ... in parceling out family property, directing the management of children and the maintenance of surviving spouse, a man gave expression both to how he conceived of the family - who belonged and who did not - and to the proper balance between control and autonomy for the future of those left behind. (Smith, 1980, 231)

As Smith makes clear, wills could include and exclude. But equally, the ability to make a will was testimony in itself of status and class position. Writing about poor folk in the American South, Ellen Douglas poignantly captures this truth.

... as for wills, they are not documents that very poor people either know or care much about. Wills and the processing of wills are for the purpose of safeguarding wealth and making money for lawyers. The question of who gets the bedstead, the mule, and the middle buster is settled in other ways. (Douglas, 1991, 113-4)⁴¹

In the midlands, my impression is that most adults left wills, only those dying untimely deaths appear not to have. Wills seem to have been left equally by men and women, indicating their involvement in the practice and their esteem for its importance.⁴²

In the process of demonstrating their commitment to dynastic growth, families selected and excluded, emphasized and dismissed persons who on genealogical grounds had a claim to inclusion. Inheritance was a major instrument by which families perpetuated themselves, ensuring transgenerational survival. Pierre Bourdieu notes that in Europe, inheritance evolved to pass power vertically down the generations, rather than horizontally to expand the power of the existing (nuclear or immediate) family. However, "in the interest of expanding family power, all children received a dowry or settlement to compensate them for not being the principal heir, enabling them to marry as favorably as possible" (Bourdieu, quoted in Nye, 1993, 17). Inheritance was a key element in the reproduction of racially bounded family, class and community.

While this was the major purpose to which this instrument was put, it was never apolitical nor gender-neutral. In this section, I will describe certain patterns which are to be found in the wills and other legal documents which determine the course of inheritance. Briefly, however, I need to explain how inheritance operated (that is, how it was facilitated in law). Secondly, I must refer to a vast comparative literature on the subject.

Inheritance is a civil process by which individuals transfer their possessions at death. Various laws in modern times regulate the process, dictating procedures and inserting the state (via its judicial arm, the Supreme Court) into the contract between the dead and the living.

41 I do not have figures for how many white midland farmers did not leave wills. In a typical US county in the 1890s, over 40% of the population did not bother with probate (registering a will with the court) (Shammas et al, 1987, 18).

42 This parallels the pattern in the US in this period (Shammas et al, 1987, 119-120).

When a person dies, s/he may have left a will. If so, this testamentary document will determine the way in which his/her goods are distributed. If not, the person's estate is declared to be intestate. In this situation, the law of succession comes into play, determining who shall get what.

The laws of succession in colonial Natal and in the Union of South Africa originated by and large in Roman-Dutch law. Despite these juridical origins, Natal's laws also bore the mark of English law which in some areas gave the testator greater freedom to bequeath property and thereby reduced the power of the state.⁴³ In Natal and South Africa there was very little legal proscription limiting the rights of the testator (will-maker) to leave property to whomsoever s/he pleased (Anon, 1959, 436).

The first law in Natal to address the issue of succession was Law 22 of 1863. This law gave to the wife who was married to her husband out of community of property, rights of succession **ab intestato**. This law was part of a tendency in North America and Europe in the second half of the nineteenth century which allowed women to inherit property and to retain control of their own property after marriage. Henceforward wives with capital were more powerful **within** their own families (Shammas et al, 1987, 6). Another effect of the liberalization of laws of succession was that illegitimate and adopted children could be recognised as eligible to inherit. As we shall see in the next chapter, this could have momentous implications.

The importance of succession became apparent when, five years later, another law (Law 2 of 1868) was passed "to regulate the Execution of Wills and Codicils" (Fraser, 1894; Corbett, Hahlo, Hofmeyr and Kahn, 1980, 586, 670). After Union, the laws of all the provinces were harmonised via Act 24 of 1913. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, inheritance in Britain began to be seen as a source of state revenue. The process was gradual, since those most vulnerable to this form of taxation, were the traditionally well-heeled, landed, politically powerful aristocracy. In Natal, Law 35 of 1905 imposed "duties on successions to property". The tax was very low. Neither surviving spouses nor estates which did not exceed £100 in value were liable to pay duty. Interestingly, 'natives' (including indentured Indians) were specifically exempted from the act.

The percentage paid depended on the relationship of the legatee to the legator. At Union, Natal had the lowest rates in the country. Direct descendants, for example, were taxed at 1%, whereas in the Cape it was 3% and in the Union (via Act 29 of 1922) the rate was fixed at 2%. Similarly brothers and sisters were taxed in Natal at 2%, in the Cape at 6% and in the Union, 4%. South Africa's rates compared very well with those of Britain: at the low end of the scale estate duty on amounts £0-£2000 was 0.5% whereas in Britain duty in this bracket varied from 1-3% (Howard, 1931, 54-5, 100). In our period, therefore, the state assisted families to perpetuate themselves economically, by making very low demands on their historically accumulated capital. In the 1920s, rates of succession duty escalated sharply.

The literature on inheritance in the context of European and North American history is truly vast. Astonishingly, I have not been able to find one historical study of inheritance in South Africa, and the local legal literature on succession is very patchy as well.⁴⁴ In general, the

43 See Weesels, 1908. In the latter part of the nineteenth century, Natal's law-makers introduced many aspects of English Law even though Roman-Dutch law was the basis for the colony's system (Spiller, 1986, 90-1). It should be noted, however, that the law in South Africa did prescribe, to some extent, that family members be included in succession arrangements. This practice is called *legitim* and was not present in English law (Wedgewood, 1929, 67).

44 For example, the authoritative collection on women in South Africa (Walker, 1990) contains no references to white women's inheritance, though African women's rights to property are discussed. A rare and illuminating example set in the Orange Free State has been documented by Colin Murray. He tells the story of the McPhersons, a settler family engaged in agriculture from the first decade of the twentieth century, who built themselves up dynastically, and transmitted their wealth transgenerationally through the mechanism of entail (Murray, 1992, 267-272).

historical interest in inheritance derives from an interest in the family and its place as an economic unit in the transition from feudalism to capitalism. By examining inheritance patterns answers are sought to key questions such as: the role played by families in accumulation; the impact of changing family demography on inheritance and vice versa; the role played by inheritance in the form of the family; inheritance as a mechanism of class differentiation; the role of inheritance in releasing or withholding family labour from the labour market; the impact of inheritance considerations on fertility patterns and so on (Brittain, 1978; Clignet, 1992; Goody, Thirsk and Thompson, 1976; Tilly, 1978).

There was one legacy of British law which had a major impact on inheritance patterns in Natal. This was primogeniture and entail. Primogeniture dated back to feudal times. It was the custom of leaving land to the eldest son. This practice privileged the eldest son over other children. Yet, perversely, it strengthened family solidarity. Commenting on partible inheritance - the sharing of inheritance rather than giving it all to one male heir - the French historian de Tocqueville wrote, "When the law ordains equal shares, it breaks that intimate connection between family feeling and preservation of the land; the land no longer represents the family" (Quoted in Ditz, 1986, 27).

A refinement of primogeniture is the practice of entail, which places restrictions on the land handed down to the eldest son, to ensure that it remains within the family for succeeding generations. In these cases, the son is generally forbidden to sell the land (Wedgewood, 1929, 70). Primogeniture was not incorporated in Natal's laws (Fraser, 1894, 241). Interestingly, however, the Natal Native Code (1878) asserted that, within African culture "primogeniture among males as a general rule for succession" applied (McLendon, 1992, 3). I read this not so much as a knowledgeable statement about African custom, but as a projection of white, male law-makers. White patriarchs wanted to assert the right of eldest son inheritance at a time when such customs were being undermined by precedents in colonial and metropolitan law. The concern then was to make a statement about the universal centrality of the family and the importance of inheritance thereto. Primogeniture often was invoked by male farm-owners when they drew up their wills. A salutary example is that of the eminent Henderson family who passed down the family farm, 'Melbrake Fell', not far from Pietermaritzburg, through five generations (Hathorn, 1973, 220-221). Entail, on the other hand, was rarely stipulated. In the case of the Woollatt family, this was fatal. S B Woollatt believed that daughters got husbands and not inheritance, so he left the family farm to his son Jack. His four redoubtable daughters were upset about this as they knew that Jack would sell it but "it had to be accepted because that was the outlook in those days" (Barbara McKenzie interview, 1992). Although entail itself may not have been invoked, there were testators who made their intentions that the land not leave the family very clear: In 1906 John Marwick of Richmond specifically so stated, and the Supreme Court later (in 1926) upheld this wish in the face of debtors demanding the liquidation of some of his assets.⁴⁵ Similarly, Henry Kimber, of Yorkshire established his eldest son, P D Kimber on the Dargle farm, 'Selsey'. Percy Kimber then gave his son, Guy, life usufruct rights over the farm but bequeathed the farm to his grandson, M Jardine Kimber when he turned 25 years old to ensure that the farm went into the fourth generation (Francis interview, 1992). Near neighbour, Jeffery Morphew of 'Furth' made a careful will, which included a primogenitary aspect when he specifically set out that "any of my sons who may desire to be farmers or who may desire to take over my landed property shall have an opportunity of doing so" but this was to be on the basis of 'seniority' and by purchase not by direct inheritance.⁴⁶

45 MSCE 10290/1925, Estate of John Marwick.

46 MSCE 2104/1917, Estate of Jeffery Morphew, Will of 5 January 1914.

Entail could be ruinous because farmers gave farms to eldest son and then, in order to give their other children something, often bonded that farm. The bond would eventually cripple the farm, making it unprofitable and causing bankruptcy which defeated the aims of entail and caused the farm to be sold. Only in cases where farmers were rich and successful were they able to apply entail successfully and keep land in the family.

In examining the wills of midland families, it became clear that most wills gave land to sons, often the eldest or most capable son. Where this was not the case, the family farm may often already have been transferred to the eldest son, smoothing inter-generational transition and avoiding death duties (Smith interview, 1992). Frequently where this occurred, the will stated that the eldest son's share of the estate was less because of the prior transaction.⁴⁷ There were many good reasons for transferring a farm to an eldest son before death. Continuity was ensured. The patriarch could maintain control of the farm, while leaving the day-to-day running of operations to the son. The patriarch could ensure by such transfer that the provision for his (and his wife's) old age was secure.

Another case where the primogeniture principle was watered down was where a patriarch attempted to provide all sons with land. In Europe, the shortage of land was a major reason for primogeniture. In Natal, at least in the nineteenth century, there was not a shortage of land, and many farmers were able to adopt a more egalitarian practice. Wealthy farmers like Charles John Smythe, for example, divided up their farms, giving each son his own sizable farm unit.⁴⁸ In other cases, particularly in the remoter areas where land was cheap fathers often purchased each son a farm. Ernest Mingay, for example, bought each son a farm (Phyllis Palframan interview, 1992).

There were dangers in veering away from the principle of primogeniture. I shall provide two examples: When Duncan McKenzie died unexpectedly (1932) he left the farm to all of his children and NOT to his eldest son. His wife regretted this as it was an obstacle to keeping the farm in the family. The result was "a bit of a mess" and led to the creation of the Cotswold Syndicate created specifically to keep the farms in McKenzie hands. The syndicate however was characterized by sibling animosity and within a generation, most of the farms had passed out of the family (Barbara McKenzie interview, 1992).

Another example is that of John Eustace Fannin. The original Fannin settler, Thomas Fannin (d 1862), established his farm 'Dargle' in the area to which the farm subsequently gave its name. His life was blotted with financial misfortune and he died insolvent. However, his personal misfortune did not fatally affect the careers of his sons. Some struck it lucky on the diamond fields, and two of the brothers became wealthy land surveyors (Juul, 1982). The more successful of the two, John Eustace Fannin, took over the management of the family farm on his father's death and rescued it from insolvency.⁴⁹ By the end of his life (d 1905) John Eustace Fannin had risen to Judge of the Native High Court. Not unexpectedly, his will was a classic of legal exactitude and even-handedness.⁵⁰ He left a portion immediately for distribution to the family, the remainder to his widow for distribution to the family subsequent to her death. John Eustace had twelve children, eleven of whom reached maturity while one

47 For example, MSCE 12180/1927, Estate of Frederick Robert Moor.

48 Smythe owned 7500 acres of farm land in a block. He divided this amongst six of his sons (MSCE 2645/1918, Estate of Charles John Smythe; Pat Smythe interview, 1993).

49 He entered the civil service as magistrate of the Lower Tugela division in 1883 and left 'Dargle' for good. But he retained ownership for the sake of his mother who with her husband, were the original settlers on the farm. When she died in 1892, he sold the farm, as there were no siblings or relations to bequeath it to. By this time, an adjacent farm, 'Kilgobbin', farmed by John Eustace's uncle, Meredyth, had become the midland headquarters of the Fannins (Juul, 1983, 124).

50 MSCE 44/87, Estate of John Eustace Fannin. Will, 26 October 1900; Codicil, 7 May 1903; Codicil, 21 October 1904.

predeceased his father, while studying at Trinity College, Cambridge. The will treated his surviving five sons and five daughters equally, so in the end each child received very little - about £200-300.⁵¹ But the nature of midland society meant that, for this prominent family at least, limited inheritance was not a disaster. Before John Eustace's death, all his children had already established themselves. He had sent all of them to Hilton or St Anne's. Ability, the family name, family capital and their education served them well. Jack (b 1876), the eldest surviving son, farmed at Dalton on a farm leased from his father. When his uncle, Meredyth, died in 1912, Jack took over his farm, 'Kilgobbin' which had become the family centre. Dennis Fannin remembers his uncle Jack as "a poor farmer but (who) succeeded in keeping his farm" (Fannin interview, 1993). Henry Fannin (b 1879) worked in the Standard Bank before joining his elder brother Jack on the Dalton farm. He was a very active soldier in the UMR, rising to the rank of major. In 1907 he married and bought a farm in Ixopo where he grew wattle and bred pedigree South Devon cattle.⁵² Meredyth (b 1881) became a magistrate. Valentine (b 1884) also farmed with his brothers at Dalton, before searching for a farm of his own in Rhodesia. He was active in the UMR, becoming its commanding officer after a nearly forty year association with the regiment. It was his time with the UMR that made him familiar with the Greytown area and he bought a farm there in c 1920 (Juul, 1983, 160-1). The youngest son, Charles, was a Rhodes Scholar who became the surveyor general of Kenya.

The Fannins were an exemplary case of familial cooperation. There were no disputes about inheritance and the extended family cohered well. Of course, this was not the story in every family. It was not uncommon for inheritance to end in acrimony. The Alcock family of Polela were dogged by inheritance struggles. Joseph Alcock was a wealthy landowner in Polela, owning at least four farms there. He had seven children. The home farm, 'Home Rule' stayed in the family for the next two generations but only after the family splintered and became embroiled in intrigue. Joseph Alcock's brother-in-law, Joseph Paterson who lived in Pietermaritzburg, seems to have entered into the spirit of what Roy Alcock describes as "Alcock nastiness" (Roy Alcock interview, 1992). According to Jane (Daphne), his granddaughter, he was "mean and nasty" and excluded his wife, a daughter and one of his sons from his will (Daphne Pennefather interview, 1992). In the next generation, family intrigue resulted in two sons being disinherited, with the family farm being left to three daughters and the remaining son. Two of the sisters then ganged up against the son for control of the farm (Roy Alcock interview, 1992). The family's history is plagued by discord with little of the cooperation that marks many midland families.

It was not uncommon for eldest sons to battle with their fathers over their inheritance. In the case of the Mingays, for example, the younger brother Wilfred (b 1891) (Son of H E Mingay) inherited the family farm, 'Inglenook', near Ixopo. His older brother, Arthur, had strong disagreements with his father and set up his own farming operation, though with money provided by his father (Phyllis Palframan interview, 1993). And when the eldest son got everything, as was the case in Andrew Green's family, he, the youngest of three sons, got nothing. When I interviewed him in 1992 he still recalled with anger this injustice (Green interview, 1992).

Being the eldest son and recipient of the family farm was not an undisguised blessing. Frequently, the gift came with obligations. Ditz describes this common strategy towards inheritance as the 'favoured heir plus burdens' approach. Productive land was given to the eldest son on condition that he assist those children who had not received inheritance as well as their wives and his parents (Ditz, 1986, 27).

51 MSCE 44/87, Estate of John Eustace Fannin; Fannin interview, 1993.

52 Howick museum cuttings collection: 'Fannin', unsourced, undated newspaper cutting; Juul, 1983, 157.

By the end of my period, farm land was expensive and it was becoming difficult to enter the land market without inheritance or some independent financial base outside of agriculture. In some cases this might have promoted a stricter approach to primogeniture, ensuring that family land stayed in the family. On the other hand, there is evidence that the sub-division of farms to provide sons with land and selling farms to raise capital has resulted in some families being forced off the land (Christison, 1986, 69). By the 1980s and 1990s, however, family farming was no longer very profitable, nor did it offer a comfortable lifestyle. Throughout the midlands, families who have been on the land for a hundred years or more have come to the end of the line. Their children are seeking well-paid jobs in the cities rather than enter the risk-riddled field of agriculture (Mackenzie interview, 1993; Jonsson interview, 1993).

Another feature of wills is the extraordinary emphasis on fairness. From the humble to the rich, fairness was generally a guiding principle. George Paterson, Pietermaritzburg tailor, made his will in 1908. He left to his 3 daughters all his property, "to be divided equally amongst them". Similarly, Joseph Alcock of 'Mossbank', Polela, left a will in 1913. He had three sons and four daughters. He left one son a 1000 acre farm in Ixopo, another £1000 cash, and the eldest, the part of the home farm (which he farmed along with his parents) (the value of which he ensured should equal £1000). Alcock, like many other testators went to great lengths to ensure fairness and his will is filled with statements such as "It is my wish, desire and intention that he shall receive a bequest the same as my other Children".⁵³

Despite the claim of some feminists that inheritance was (and is) a major mechanism for the perpetuation of patriarchal power I shall here take a different position.⁵⁴ The issue is complex, however. Wedgewood's classic study of inheritance patterns in Britain in the 1920s found that men inherited much more than did women, that in the categories of large inheritance, men were particularly dominant, and that only in the categories where small amounts were inherited, women predominated (Wedgewood, 1929, 48). Yet 30 per cent of all property subject to Estate Duty was left to women in England (Wedgewood, 1929, 53).

Wedgewood also found that where women did inherit large amounts, they did not convert this into productive capital, but rather through unstated processes, allowed it to dwindle, leaving less to their heirs than they themselves had inherited. In the case of men, the trend was dramatically different with much more left to their heirs than they themselves had received (Wedgewood, 1929, 142). A possible explanation for this, is the gendered structuring of business and the fact that men were in a much better position to accumulate on the basis of their inheritance. A finding in the context of the United States comes to somewhat different conclusions: Shammass et al found that there was virtually no distinction in wills as between sons and daughters in the nineteenth century except by affluent testators who tended to favour sons (Shammass et al, 1987, 108).

In judging the gendered effect of inheritance one should distinguish between the law and its implementation, and the enactment of wills. In the case of the law, in the 1920s, the English Law of Property (1922) brought in a new age of gender equality, confirming a "revolution (that had) been quietly, stealthily going on", one which had gradually but surely undermined the practice of primogeniture (Lee, 1927, 174). These and other laws affecting succession, passed in the 1920s, were described as "a new charter for women. It is a new victory for the common people".⁵⁵ Yet even if in law and in its execution, there was equality, this did not prevent

53 Wills of George Paterson and Joseph Alcock in possession of Daphne Pennefather.

54 The most recent feminist literature eschews single causes of women's oppression, including that of inheritance. See Barrett and Phillips, 1992, 2.

55 In the US, similar developments occurred. A 1917 law amendment (Law of Decedents' Estates) gave women equal share in the marriage estate and, in 1920 women got the vote (Shammass et al, 1987, 165).

testators from leaving property to sons exclusively. I have argued above, that while this did happen, the instances were not sufficiently numerous and the counter tendency was sufficiently strong, to substantiate the claim that inheritance was not a major source of gender inequality in the midlands.

The one obvious inheritance practice which discriminated strongly against women was primogeniture which, in its narrowest form, could leave daughters nothing.⁵⁶ Francina Otto of the wealthy Pietermaritzburg Otto family, for example, was totally excluded from her father's will. She married a new emigrant, with a public school pedigree but no skills, and ended her life, sour and bitter, running a boarding house in Umkomaas (Pennington interview, 1992). Some women did feel aggrieved at being neglected, Joy Taylor, one of P D Simmons's daughters, for example, claimed that she got no inheritance. She put this down to the process of entail - "a silly old-fashioned thing" (Joy Taylor Interview, 1992). In fact, a perusal of the records pertaining to her inheritance show something different.

Percy Simmons died in 1913. He left four children, two sons and two daughters.⁵⁷ He left his two farms to his wife and sons. For the rest, he set up a Trust and instructed the executors to "divide the Trust Estate among all my children in equal portions share and share alike In arriving at the value of the Trust Estate the Trustees are hereby directed to include therein the value of my farms 'Brayhill' and 'Guildford' at the value thereof at the time of my death and the value thereof shall be charged to my eldest son or other my descendant entitled to the farms as part of the share to which he is entitled".⁵⁸

Joy did not like her father whom she described as "a difficult, quick-tempered man" (Taylor interview, 1992). Maude Simmons only died in 1939, by which time the proceeds of the estate had been whittled down considerably. She left her share of the family farm to the surviving son, and her jewellery and silver in equal share to her daughters. It is perhaps these circumstances that caused Joy to represent the will as a major injustice.⁵⁹

Others noted the gender difference, but not necessarily with rancour. Agnes Pennefather put it simply: "Among the Fosters, men got land, girls got money" (Agnes Pennefather interview, 1992).

Once women had received their inheritance, there were only a limited range of things that could be done with it. What was quite usual was for it to be included in the husband's farming operation, which was generally regarded as the family's operation. Thus a female inheritor would bury her inheritance in a communal project over which she had little control (Loudon, 1970, 41). While the female inheritor might make the calculation that she would be able to bequeath her own property at her death, or might justify such a strategy in terms of her becoming part of a new family, her father (the male testator) could take alarm at the alienation of what he considered to be family property. In such instances, precautions could be taken. In his 1930 will, Robert Marwick of Richmond (b 1872), deemed his wife his sole heir, but stipulated that if she remarry, she should not alienate property inherited to her new husband, but should draw up a will leaving such property to their children.⁶⁰ Another kind of precaution

56 In the case of the Underberg Palframans, for example, the two sons (William (b 1892) and George) got farms, the seven daughters virtually nothing (Roger Palframan interview, 1992).

57 His elder son was killed in the First World war.

58 A search for P D Simmons's file proved fruitless. There is no record of it in the Natal Archive Depot, so I have relied on the records of his wife's estate in which his will is, fortuitously, duplicated.

59 MSCE 29040/1939, Estate of Maude Simmons.

60 MSCE 35158/1942, Estate of Robert Arthur Marwick.

was not to include in one's will daughters who were well-off on account of marriage (Solomon interview, 1992; Barbara McKenzie interview, 1993). This left more for sons and those daughters who were either single, or who merited consideration in terms of their own straitened circumstance.

Not all women were prepared to sink their lot into the family. For some, loyalty to their family of birth remained primary. In 1886 W J Fly bought two adjacent farms in Elandskop from the Natal Land and Colonisation Company. In making the purchase and in keeping the farms running, he borrowed money from his wives (he was married three times). When he died in 1939, the farms were divided up and parts sold in order to repay the widows' families for their original financial contributions (Fly interview, 1992). In other cases, women found the family into which they married a source of irritation, a burden, or a prison. These women could take their revenge when they drew up their wills. When John Craven Nicholson died in 1920, aged 61, he left no children. His wife, Alice, became the major beneficiary. He provided for her generously, setting up an estate and stipulating a minimum of £500 pa for her living costs to be paid from that estate. He also stipulated that the executors consult with her in relation to his farm land and investments. It soon became clear that Alice was not going to cooperate. She refused to sign legal papers and neglected to answer correspondence.⁶¹

Her nephew, Ravenor Nicholson, looked after her Richmond farm, 'Hillingdon', as an act of family loyalty. She did not thank him for it, or mention him in her will. A family member's view of her was that she was a "tough woman". She was very mean and rarely gave birthday gifts. She was called "Auntie Millions" by the extended Nicholson family. "She used the family and left them nothing in her will" (Skonk Nicholson interview, 1993). Skonk Nicholson's memory was correct. When she died, aged 94, in 1954, her estate was worth £21 000. She left not a penny to any of her family. She bequeathed it to London charities such as St Dunstan's Home for the Blind and the Governesses' Benevolent Institution.⁶²

As indicated earlier, husbands generally left their wives with a lifetime usufruct over their farms and property. If there was more than one farm in the estate, other farms might be given to sons, but even here, wives were often left with some jurisdiction or claim against those farms. A particularly generous example of providing for a wife, is the example of Captain Ulric Knut Mackenzie who was killed in the First World war, in 1916, aged 43. He farmed at Lidgetton. He had no children and his parents lived in London. He provided his wife with a trust fund, and specifically stipulated that if she remarried she could dispose of the estate as she chose.⁶³ While generally provided for well, widows could also be the subject of punitive conditions. Perhaps the most punitive is to be found in the will of James Marwick. His son, the executor, was instructed to pay from a trust set up, "whatever money she may need from time to time, so long as she shall live, or so long as she shall remain my widow." If she were to remarry he stipulated that she should get the derisory sum of £5 pa and would "receive nothing more from my Estate".⁶⁴

As has already been indicated in the case of John Craven Nicholson's widow, it was in the power of widows, to either promote or reject the family project. In some cases, wives/widows followed their husbands closely, choosing to give farms to sons. In other cases, however, they might (without endangering the family project) consciously make a gendered choice. Charlotte Moor (nee Moodie) was married to F R Moor. She was an energetic and creative woman, who

61 MSCE 5617/1920, Estate of John Craven Nicholson, Walter Thrash to Master of the Supreme Court, 19 September 1921.

62 MSCE 1817/1954, Estate of Alice Louisa Nicholson (widow of John Craven Nicholson).

63 MSCE 600/1916, Estate of Captain Ulric Knut Mackenzie (10th SAJ).

64 MSCE 13369/1928, Estate of James William Thomas Marwick.

wrote novels, diaries and took a keen interest in family and public affairs. Shortly before her husband's death (1927) she made a will. In it she named as beneficiaries only two of her children, her daughters. The boys were ignored, presumably because their father had catered well for them.⁶⁵ She gave the farm 'Craigievar' to her daughters Charlotte Stella and Marjorie Esme on condition that no part of it be sold until 20 years after her death. She then divided all her worldly goods between her two daughters and three daughters-in-law.⁶⁶

Perhaps what is most significant about the patterns of inheritance is that they seldom included persons who were not members of the family, however distant. Wealth was kept in the family, either on the male or female side. And since the midland families were so intermarried, such wealth even if it went via daughters into other families, went into consolidating a community. It was extremely rare for Africans to be beneficiaries. James Ralfe was descended from the earliest settlers in the Estcourt area. His family had a long association with local African families who were either resident on family farms or who had long been in family service. When he died in 1921, he remembered his African servants in his will.

[T]o my faithful domestic servant Umfaba Mbongwe in consideration of her services to my late mother and subsequently to myself the interest on a sum of £300 sterling for the term of her natural life and also ten average cows and eight good draft oxen together with yokes and spanning gear for eight together also with six sound blankets such bed linen as she may select two pillows a bedstead and mattress five chairs and a table and I direct that she shall be permitted to reside on my farm at Frere (near Estcourt) free of charge for the term of her natural life and in regard to this bequest I direct that it shall be free of all such restrictions and control as usually attach by law or custom to the property of Native women in Natal ... and to my native servant Franz Mgati a sum of fifteen pounds sterling.⁶⁷

This rare case shows that there were weak (and very limited) impulses within the midland settler community to create families along principles which ignored biological family and racial divisions. In the next chapter, we shall witness the fate of such attempts in an unsympathetic environment.

In the period under review, there were changes in inheritance practice. These are in line with the changes identified by Toby Ditz in her study of the US East Coast in the early nineteenth century. Ditz identifies two contradictory pressures on inheritance: provision and unity. By provision she means the need to maintain productive capacity, and by unity, the concern for perpetuating, transgenerationally, the family line. In an undeveloped economy where communities are isolated and totally dependent for survival and wealth on production from farming and where the marketable surplus is small, families are likely to settle all of their male offspring on farms (a process Ditz calls patrimonial inheritance). In this situation, the interests of daughters and spouses and the concern for egalitarian inheritance practices, is secondary to the imperative to establish viable farms (Ditz, 1986, 37).

The development of the economy and the growing productive base of agricultural families allows for a more inclusive, less gender-skewed approach to inheritance (extended cognate inheritance). In this study, the agricultural economy was, by 1880, beginning to generate surpluses for local and export markets. Most of the wills examined therefore belong more in

⁶⁵ F R Moor left a substantial estate to his sons, and nothing to his daughters. It thus appears as though there was some agreement between the couple to pass property down a gendered line (MSCE 12180/1927, Estate of Frederick Robert Moor).

⁶⁶ MSCE 16177/1930, Estate of Charlotte Mary St Clair Moor. See also the will of Isabella Cramond Mackenzie, which left her entire estate to her unmarried daughter, so long as she remained so. MSCE 2429/1918.

⁶⁷ MSCE 6091/1921, Estate of James Ralfe, Will dated 11 February 1920.

the extended cognate category, though in areas far from markets, unconnected by rail and poorly developed, patrimonial patterns persisted until later.

Inheritance, it was widely conceded by informants, was a particularly powerful mechanism for perpetuating the presence of white families in the midlands and stabilizing their productive and social base, even when the cost of this was intra-family dispute (Francis interview, 1992). It frequently functioned to strengthen kin ties, because wills bound family members together in a range of complex and reciprocal arrangements (eg grown sons were often required "to care for aged parents, to provide legacies for other adult sisters and brothers, and to co-operate with each other in the running of inherited enterprises" (Ditz, 1986, 33)). Retaining land in the family prevented the intrusion of outsiders, and permitted the consolidation of the community. Retaining land within the family, in turn, rested on careful inheritance practices and monogamy.

CONCLUSION

The family was the basic unit out of which the ONF community was constructed. That the community operated credibly was because the family was a healthy, dynamic institution, able to respond to the various pressures which built up during this period. The family was also able to contain centripetal forces which threatened it - wives remained at home, and daughters even when educated, generally did not lose contact and steer a course independent of family. The family's vitality rested on the fact that it worked for men and women alike. Women took and were granted a place within that family. Over time their position changed: they moved out of production and into the vitally important realm of social display and interaction and in the process became ladies. Both in relation to their own and other families, women had the task of ensuring that the family name was not tarnished. For the most part, they undertook this work with gusto and effectively. In it they were affirmed.⁶⁸ Despite having some professional options and resources of their own (these often coming to them through inheritance), ONF women tended to commit themselves (and their resources) to the family. The success of the family, in the end, however, cannot be considered in isolation of other factors. It succeeded not because ONF men were generous or kind, or because the sexual division of labour was equal, or because women were remembered in wills. Nor did it succeed, because women had no options, because they were downtrodden beyond the point of rebellion, without option or capacity to do anything other than be wife and mother. I have argued that women were in fact powerful within the family and this certainly improved that social institution's potential to serve as an effective organiser of community. But in the end, the success of the family has to be understood in wider terms - that it was in the family that racially exclusive, classed conceptions of society were embodied. These conceptions were translated through daily practices and institutions (some of which have been discussed in this thesis) into social power which white men and women shared alike.

⁶⁸ Here I take issue with the view that white women lacked 'social prestige' in the colonial period (Walker, 1990, 111).

Chapter 9 The Forgotten and the Excluded

- The Secret History of the ONFs

Part of the myth of the ONFs is that they were a cohesive grouping, supportive of one another, a big happy family, you might say. In this chapter, this myth is exposed. Writing in a different context, Corrigan and Sayer argue that claims of unity involve the development of an integrative vocabulary which in turn produces the "active disintegration - dilution, disruption, denial - of alternatives" (Corrigan and Sayer, 1985, 198). The major mechanism by which the ONFs presented unity was to silence dissident voices and deny their existence. This involved withdrawing economic support and social recognition, seeking and using legislative power to isolate and marginalize and, subsequently, to tamper with the historical record to make the 'blobs of shame' disappear.

In preceding chapters, the class, gender and racial aspects of settler identity have been examined. These were highly prescriptive and operated on the basis of binary oppositions, so that not to conform to social prescription meant *ipso facto*, that one did not belong. The processes by which belonging and not belonging were negotiated were complex and I have not the evidence nor space to explore this further. What I can do in this chapter, is to bring forward examples of exclusion and silencing, to demonstrate what sorts of actions and identities constituted a breach of community.

I have used three descriptive categories to try and make sense of processes of exclusion. The degree of exclusion varied, depending on the nature of the breach. The mildest sanction was reserved for those struck by misfortune. Misfits were handled in various ways, depending on the nature of the impropriety or defect and the power which the alleged misfit had. By far the most unacceptable transgression was miscegenation (an outdated and normative term, used here for convenience and alliterative allure).

Misfortune

Many ONFs were supported through difficult times by family members, but occasionally, family members chose not to help. The result could be very serious. If by misfortune you lost your land and your home, you could find yourself socially and geographically isolated. And forgotten.

The Slatters were the aristocracy of Greytown. They owned huge lands, an impressive stone house. They were very active in civic organisations, including the Umvoti Agricultural Society. Twin brothers, Walter John and David Clarke Slatter (b 1855) set up the farming operation in Greytown. Walter did well on the diamond mines, which allowed him a luxurious lifestyle, including regular overseas trips. On one such trip he left the farm and his affairs in his brother's hands. Without consultation, Clarke invested in the Barberton/Pilgrim's Rest gold fields. The result was disastrous and although Walter did not lose his farm he had virtually to start from scratch. This resulted, not unnaturally, in a lot of ill-feeling between the brothers and their offspring. Family legend has it that Clarke then married and lived at 'Holmesdale' (another portion of the original farm). Unsuccessful with ostrich farming, he emigrated to Rhodesia around 1930 (Slatter interview, 1993). The official record suggests at the least, an unrecorded chapter in the story. In 1903, Clarke was allotted a 66 acre plot in the Weenen

irrigation settlement. This settlement was reserved for men without capital or means. His progress was pitifully slow, with a report from the surveyor general in 1915 commenting that progress had been "unsatisfactory".¹ In 1917 he was warned of impending action by the Lands Department unless he made better use of the plot. Unable to advance his cause alone, he informed the inspector that he would seek assistance from his twin brother. This was clearly successful, for the following year, he was granted the plot freehold.² For nearly forty years, Clarke Slatter had been shunned by his successful brother. It was perhaps only the passage of time that healed the nineteenth century wounds. Clarke was tolerated but not assisted until absolute calamity stared him in the face. And assistance did not bring re-integration either. His surname could only echo past glories; it could not conjure up the material luxury with which it remained associated in Greytown.

Misfits

A person of 'feeble intelligence' was a misfit. Darwinist ideas of racial purity and the survival of the fittest meant that men, particularly, who did not meet social expectations around intelligence endangered the ONF myth.

Edric Smythe (b 1888) was the sixth child (third son) of Charles John Smythe. In 1911 he married Kathrine, daughter of a local farmer, George Ross. In time they had nine children. From 1911 onward, Edric farmed a family farm, 'Dwalen', with the help of his father. In 1918, on the death of his father, he inherited the farm. The conditions of his inheritance were different from those of his brothers - the farm was held in trust for him by some family and family friends.³

One of the reasons for Charles to insist on this form of inheritance was that Edric demonstrated himself to be an incompetent farmer. Despite substantial assistance from his father, he consistently farmed at a loss, having to borrow money from his father (over and above the other assistance freely given) to keep the farm going.

By 1928, his brother Mungo, one of the trustees, noted: "My brother now owns no livestock and has practically no assets, and I believe he is considerably in debt to tradespeople and others. His property is not being properly managed or farmed, and there is very little income from it."

"My said brother is weak-willed, and is prone to acts which are not in the interests of himself or his family. ... I declare that it is in the true interests of my said brother, his wife and his children, that someone should be appointed to manage, control and conduct his affairs on his behalf."⁴

To support his contention, Mungo Smythe approached a doctor who declared Edric, "feeble-minded".⁵ Mungo's application was granted, and the drain on family funds rapidly stopped with the leasing of the farm to the Arbuthnot family. Edric continued to live on the farm but some time around 1950 he was admitted into a mental hospital. In February 1993 I

1 CAD, LDE-N 310, 2912, Surveyor General to Secretary for Lands, minute, n/d.

2 CAD, URU 355, 891, (n/d).

3 MSCE 2645/1918, Estate of Charles John Smythe.

4 MSCE 13394/1928, Estate of Edric Murray Smythe of 'Strathearn', Weenen County, Affidavit of Mungo Charles Smythe, 28 April 1928.

5 MSCE 13394/1928, Estate of Edric Murray Smythe of 'Strathearn', Weenen County, Dr N Egerton Brown to Master of the Supreme Court (Affidavit dated 18 April 1928).

interviewed Pat Smythe, nephew of Edric. When I recounted the sad tale of Edric's decline, he questioned its veracity vigorously (Pat Smythe interview, 1993). The story of Edric in the aristocratic Smythe family seems to have been sanitized so that the family name avoids the opprobrium of 'madness'.⁶

Duncan McKenzie's family had the difficulty of accommodating and explaining the eccentric behaviour of Billy (b 1898), Duncan's eldest son. Today he is remembered as the black sheep of the family, who failed dismally to follow in the glorious footsteps of his father. He never married. He was held responsible for losing the family farm. He was known for drinking and womanizing. He was frequently observed at the Howick magistrate's court to face charges of assault - he had a penchant for beating up Africans.⁷ After serving in France in the First World War, he scorned his father's military reputation, by saying that he saw more action in one day in France than his father had seen in his whole career! Not surprisingly, when he returned after living for a while in Britain, his father threw him out of his house (Barbara McKenzie interview, 1993; Pat McKenzie interview, 1994). Billy did not snugly fit the mould of settler masculinity. His displays of aggression were out of step with the times (after all, his father had beaten up blacks without being socially censured). He failed to meet his manly obligation of marriage and protecting and developing family property. Yet, as the son of Sir Duncan with control of the family farm, he could not be wished away or ignored. The family history has come down with Billy in it - testimony to rugged diversity and 'character'.

Families did try to fit awkward members into a family narrative that was consistent with the values which they upheld. This was often necessary as family members, even in prominent families, were not immune from scandal. In two families noted for public-spiritedness and achievement, the blight of having leading male members found guilty of fraud, left its mark. Herbert Murray, son of government minister Sir T K Murray (and my great grandfather), and chairman of the Natal Law Society was found guilty of fraud, as was the Ixopo lawyer Knighton Chadwick, who came from a family which had provided many Justices of the Peace and which featured regularly in the social pages.⁸

Another awkward case affecting a prominent family involved the public conduct of Ralph Tatham, brother of F S Tatham, Judge President of Natal. Two Tatham brothers, one a surveyor and the other an adventurer/sailor/soldier emigrated from London in 1850. The fortunes of the elder son, Edmund, and his family were good, while that of the younger, Robert Bristow Tatham, were mixed. The latter spent much of his life soldiering, had a spell on the diamond mines, and when he died in 1881, left nine children and no money (Tatham, n/d). The Tathams were numerous and spread through midland society as farmers, lawyers, and military men. Perhaps the best known of the family was Frederick Spence Tatham, Ralph's brother. He was described in the family history as "a very great man" who has been called "'The Caesar (sic) of Natal'" (Tatham, n/d). On the other hand, Gillian Tatham, the family historian, knew very little about Ralph, despite dedicating many years to researching the family (Tatham interview, 1995). It was known that he had made and lost a fortune, lived for a while in Britain, and married twice. In recent researches, Gillian has discovered the existence of a third wife, previously unacknowledged. She continues her researches in this area. In addition there were vague tales of his having been involved in the 1914 or 1922 Witwatersrand strikes. On this score, I was able to add some illumination. Having researched Ralph in the Central

6 Another uncomfortable category of family history is the suicide. This is also seldom spoken about or recorded. It is only with the modern craze of discovering family history that suicides become clearly visible as part of the family record. In a tragic case, three out of the ten Gold brothers committed suicide (Christison, 1986, 69-70).

7 Notes kindly lent to me by Nan Slade, Howick.

8 These events have come down to me from some of my relatives in Natal. I am personally related to the Murrays (my grandmother was Herbert's daughter) and the Farrers (my grandmother's sister married a Farrer).

Archive Depot in Pretoria and elsewhere, I was able to inform Gillian that Ralph had championed the cause of white labour in his stretch as Natal parliamentarian (1906-7) and in the Transvaal from at least 1914. He approached government with a variety of schemes to open gold and diamond mines and work them entirely with white workers.⁹ In 1915 he was struck off the Transvaal lawyer's roll for professional misconduct and unprofessional conduct (overcharging, gaining evidence in an underhand way, representing clients with conflicts of interest).¹⁰ He recovered by becoming director of the Rand Sporting Club, but became increasingly involved in radical politics. In the words of Deputy Commissioner of the Transvaal CID, he became "Anti-British" and professed to be "a revolutionist and a republican". The policeman thought Ralph an "inconsequential and shallow man, without deep thinking power" and "not altogether of sound mind".¹¹ Ralph was very far from being a "very great man", and his history has consequently been pared down in the collective family memory to a number of exciting anecdotes which do not challenge comfortable family nostrums. Only the patient endeavours of a member of later generations has been able to prize the secrets, carefully concealed by familial amnesia, from the past.

Family amnesia was also useful in coping with 'loners'. Quite contrary to the normal practice of finding every detail of the lives of the famous and important, the lives of 'loners' were simply allowed to disappear from memory. In the Alcock family, such a case came to my attention. Joseph Alcock included all his children in his will. When I interviewed the Alcocks, there was no record of Thomas. Family members suspected that he went off to the Transvaal, but described him as "a mystery". Disappearance could save families from explaining 'loners' or 'n'er do wells' and was convenient when protecting their good name (Daphne Pennefather interview, 1992).

Sexual misfits are not easy to find in ONF history. This was not because there were none, but because of the great stigma attached to sexual misdemeanours such as homosexuality and incest and or even *mésalliances*. In chapter 3, the evidence suggests that clandestine sexual liaisons between men would have continued into adulthood.¹² But no interviewer could or would identify an ONF member as having been homosexual. Amongst the men, I interviewed, any question that suggested that sex between men had ever occurred between white midland men was treated with incredulous disdain.¹³ Evidence of incest is even more difficult to find. On condition of anonymity, an informant told me that it was a well-kept family secret that the second last born child in a prominent midland family was fathered by the mother's son-in-law.

What was sexually (and procreatively) permissible changed over time. In the 1850s, Captain John Chadwick came to Natal with his wife and his servant, Jane Lloyd. Shelagh Spencer has unearthed the fact that Chadwick had children by both his wife and servant/mistress. The naming of these children was complicated, but most took the biological father's name in adulthood (Spencer, 1987, 64-5). I came upon this strange situation when I interviewed the great grandson of Alice Maud Mary Perdita Lloyd/Chadwick. He knew of the Chadwick connection, but was totally unaware of its complex nature. (Power-Wilson interview, 1995).¹⁴ What was on the fringes of acceptability in the middle of the nineteenth century, became

9 CAD, MNW 261, MM 3787/14; PM 1/1/275, PM 148/24/1916; MNW 338, MM2086/16; MNW 487, MM 2624/19.

10 CAD, JUS 220, 3/949/15 Attorney General v Tatham.

11 CAD, SAP 36, CONF 6/596/18/2, Deputy Commissioner, CID, Transvaal to Deputy Commissioner, SAP (Transvaal), 25 April 1918.

12 Homosexual activity was common in the metropole and in the empire at the turn of the century. The (white) men involved seldom admitted it, even to friends (Hyam, 1990, 37).

13 This is hardly surprising. Settler masculinity was stridently heterosexual, and any suggestion of homosexuality therefore threatened that masculinity (Edwards, 1990, 114).

14 See MSCE 32/147, Estate of Alice Maud Mary Perdita Farrer (nee Lloyd), of 'Scaleby', Boston.

unacceptable during the next century. Now, with the passage of another half century, the genealogical truth is becoming palatable.

Miscegenation

Sexual relations with Africans was an inflammatory issue in the midlands by the 1880s. It may not always have been so. The early settlers in Natal were single men. It was common for them to have black mistresses and, in the case of John Dunn, to marry and establish families with black women. In the midlands, some sense of the isolation which was a factor promoting sexual intimacy with African women, can be gleaned from the following: "Off the main wagon tracks visitors would be few. One family (the Ralfe's at Bergvliet) resided fourteen years in the neighbourhood of the military post at the Bushman's River without seeing a European woman" (Hattersley, 1936, 155). Isolation gradually become less severe, but between 1880 and 1900, white men still outnumbered white women in large numbers (Beall, 1982, 209). In the colonial context, skewed sexual demography and the expectation that men would increase their sexual experience resulted in high levels of sex between white men and black women (Hyam, 1990, 5, 201).¹⁵

Sex between white men and black women remained common, despite growing concern and condemnation.¹⁶ Evidence to the Native Affairs Commission in 1906 and 1907 is replete with moral concern for the increase in "illicit intercourse between Europeans and natives".¹⁷

Throughout the midlands the chorus was echoed. There was little disagreement about the phenomenon or its moral effect, though some disagreement about responsibility. William Nicholson of Richmond is reported to have said: "It was said that low white people had recourse to this illicit connection, but the witness was of opinion that the native women were more to blame than the poor white people." On the other hand, Greytown's magistrate, held that although white policemen were mainly blamed it was "young farmers (who) were, to a large extent, the principal offenders."¹⁸

While the temptation endured, by the second and third decades of the twentieth century, casual sex with black women was taboo. Derrick Braithwaite, Seven Oaks farmer, spoke candidly about his memories of the temptation of a sexual relationship with black women. He said that he had resisted the temptation because "it would have broken my mother's heart." Derrick said such action would have been "dishonourable" and "dirty" (Braithwaite interview, 1993). Where it happened, it was increasingly secret.

A blind eye might have been turned to occasional sexual 'error'. I have not come across any lasting exclusion or family sanction inflicted on transgressors. But having sex with a black woman was one thing, while living or marrying her, was quite another. As late as the turn of the century some white farmers were still entering permanent relationships with black women. In Richmond and Greytown, witnesses to the Native Affairs Commission confirmed that cohabitation and marriage were, if anything, becoming more frequent.¹⁹ Very often such unions

15 This was also the case for Johannesburg at the turn of the century (van Onselen, 1982, Vol 1, 104).

16 In Daphne Rooke's novel (1990) of planter families in the Natal sugar belt, set in the period including the South African and First World wars, little doubt is left as to the prevalence of such sexual encounters.

17 Native Affairs Commission, 1906-7, evidence of John Marwick, Richmond, 337.

18 Native Affairs Commission, 1906-7, Evidence, Evidence of William Nicholson (341) and Arthur D Graham (534).

19 It was rare for white women to form permanent relationships with black men. Advocate John Jackson of Richmond gave evidence to the effect that "He knew two European women who were married according to native rites to native men, and they had lived together for the last 20 years." Native Affairs Commission, 1906-7, Evidence, 343.

were struck in terms of African custom. One of the reasons for this was the refusal of white clergymen to perform marriage ceremonies for mixed couples. Rev Algernon James Fryer, Vicar of Richmond said he "refused to perform any religious ceremony of marriage between the two races, because he dared not pronounce God's blessing upon what he did not believe God blessed."²⁰ This meant that white men were drawn into the process of bridewealth. J T Marwick of Richmond said that on the Illovo River (near Richmond) "a number of farmers (were) living with black women whom they had lobola'd."²¹ While this might have been costly, it was not without material benefit in the longer term. Apart from the well-known fact that obtaining a wife in this way gained access to her labour, it also placed her reproductive capacity within the realm of accumulation.²² The Rev Algernon Fryer recalled a case in which a white man ("of loose reputation") married an African woman in a Christian ceremony. He refused to let his daughter marry a white man because he intended "to get this lobolo (of a wagon and a span and a horse and saddle) for his daughter from a black man."²³

But the situation was not so simple. It was not the case that there was a sudden upsurge of collective libidinous energy directed towards African women. Rather there was a long tradition of white men living with African women, which was being challenged by a new moral climate. William Nicholson, gives eloquent testimony to this history: "I am a Colonist of 1859 ... From the first, to the present day, I have lived amongst the natives. I would never employ a Coolie. ... More than half my life I have lived alone with my native servants, and they look after me very well, and have nursed me most carefully through several illnesses".²⁴ I heard this theme of caring articulated once by one of my oldest informants, Woodrow Cross. After attending Michaelhouse for five years, beginning about 1914, he worked a ranch in what is now Zambia. He never married and lived alone with Africans. When I interviewed him at age 90, he was living with a number of African servants. Exchanges were gentle, kind and mutually respectful. He explained that he had lived with his servants for twenty five years and expected to die with them. He explained at length how he had been brought up by *Ntombis* (African girls), learnt to speak Zulu at an early age and had African playmates. He then commented on current racial prejudice, by saying, simply, "I treat that person like I would like to be treated myself" (Cross interview, 1993). It is impossible to know whether these relationships had a sexual content, but they were increasingly suspect. Cross-racial sex could only be monitored or prevented if intimacy itself was proscribed. Men like Nicholson and Cross, with 'good' ONF names and independent resources, escaped exclusion and censure. They did not flaunt their social status or preferences. They remained within the ONF fold, though I doubt whether they would have been acceptable at the Victoria Club.

In the 1880s in Britain, a purity campaign was launched to end moral laxity. Directed primarily at the working class, its effect was to expand restrictive legislation and to reduce sexual opportunity (Hyam, 1990, 65). A similar hysteria swept Natal. European prestige and the purity of the midland community was in jeopardy. Settlers and energetic clergymen set out to eradicate depravity.²⁵ They proposed to: legalize inter-racial marriages and sexual

20 Native Affairs Commission, 1906-7, Evidence, 350.

21 Native Affairs Commission, 1906-7, Evidence, 338.

22 This argument is developed by Jeff Guy (1990) with respect to pre-colonial society where he argues that women produced value and men appropriated it.

23 Native Affairs Commission, 1906-7, Evidence, 350.

24 Native Affairs Commission, 1906-7, Evidence, 342-3.

25 At about the same time, campaigns against 'vice' were being waged in the Transvaal (van Onselen, 1982, Vol 1, 105) and a decade later, a similar crusade was launched in Durban (Poel, 1989).

intercourse, disenfranchise men guilty of such action and categorize the progeny of mixed marriages as 'black' (and therefore subject to customary (African) law).²⁶

At this time there were no laws in Natal outlawing either sex or marriage with blacks. Despite public pressure, laws were slow to come. In the absence thereof, judgements in the Supreme Court began to confirm the marginalisation of 'coloured' children. By 1911, judgments in the Cape Supreme Court judgment confirmed that children of mixed parents were to be categorized in terms of the darker parent (Zaal, 1992, 386). It was only in 1927 that the Immorality Act made it illegal for whites to have illicit sex with blacks (Horrell, 1978, 8). And it was to be another 21 years before apartheid brought a grim and logical conclusion to this trend with the Prohibition of Mixed Marriages Act (Horrell, 1978, 18).

So why was there this punitive attitude towards blacks and sex? Love is subversive, as Joan Meyer says, "It is no coincidence that societies seeking to preserve the power differential between subdivisions of the population discourage the forming of love ties between members of different groups" (Meyer, 1991, 24). Love attacks and undermines convention. "The contradiction between the project of erotic love and the requirements of patriarchal institutions - marriage, property and kinship relations - also has to be recognised as a permanent tension in patriarchal society" (Connell, 1987, 217). Ann Stoler suggests that the response of white men was to monitor 'their' women closely as any breach in the codes of social separation which had developed would have dented the prestige of settler society (Stoler, 1989). White women thus became themselves the source of neurotic concern - that they would go off with a black man. This fear is brilliantly evoked by Doris Lessing in her novel about Rhodesia in the 1940s, The Grass is Singing. In general, cross-racial social and sexual relationships were placed under ever tighter surveillance, with ever heavier legal and social sanction being levelled against them.

In 1918, Otto Scott Mackenzie was one of the many people who died in the influenza epidemic. He was 39 at the time, unmarried, the son of a miller. He had bought his 407 acre farm in 1907 with a loan from his mother. When he died, the net value of his estate was calculated at £1828. It was his will which caused the problem. In his will of November 1910 he left everything to his mother. But, in a codicil made in December 1915, he altered his will. "I give to my illegitimate child Bonfire (sic) Johnston 20 (twenty) black oxen together with wagon and gear complete." The document is messy and not clear, but it was clear that Bonfire's mother was Maisie-Ka-Mbudula and that he had thought of leaving her "the remaining oxen and wagon at Otto's Kop with gear complete" but had changed his mind and left "The remainder of my property to go to my two brothers Lorne and Eric McKenzie (sic) respectively".²⁷

In trying to give effect to the will, the master of the Supreme Court suggested to Richmond solicitor, R A Marwick, that Bonfire (b 1908) be given maintenance and education costs. Following this, Marwick did his best to undermine the intention of MacKenzie's will. He said all the black oxen had been sold. Secondly he noted that "the child is a male, and not a female," and as he is under the control of his mother, who is a native, and who would squander any money which might be allowed to her for the child's maintenance and education, I do not propose to recognise his claim to any share in the estate, unless I am compelled to."²⁸ Marwick then reported to the master that he had met with Bonfire's mother, but she had not been

26 *Native Affairs Commission, 1906-7*, Evidence of Rev P Burges (Highflats) (96), Harry Frank Hayes (Howick) (198), J T Marwick (338), John Frederick Jackson (343), Fryer (359), Cannon Pennington (542).

27 MSCE 3229/1918, *Estate of Otto Scott Mackenzie of Otto's Kop*, Richmond, Will, 23 November 1910; Codicil 11 December 1915.

28 MSCE 3229/1918, *Estate of Otto Scott Mackenzie*, Master of Supreme Court to Marwick, 31 January 1919 and undated reply.

accompanied by her guardian, therefore the matter could not be finalised.²⁹ Marwick's triumph came in April 1919 when he discovered that Bonfire's mother, "Nokulunga, alias Maisie was the lawful wife of one Sikundhla, from whom she was divorced at her own suit, during June 1916". This, he noted, removed any obligation in common law for the estate to support the child.³⁰ The master lodged a moral protest at this action, but it seems as though Bonfire was effectively disinherited of his birthright and eternally cut off from his father's line. There was thus a close correlation in the midlands between coloured children and poverty. In this way the divide between white and black was consolidated with respective associations of wealth and poverty.³¹

Another example of brutal exclusion comes from the Braithwaite family of Seven Oaks. Settlers since the nineteenth century, they had farmed productively and given yeoman service to the Umvoti Mounted Rifles. Not all of them, however, fitted comfortably into the midland community.

John William Braithwaite (b 1881) died on his small 199 acre farm at Otto's Bluff in 1931. He was very poor, his estate eventually yielding £383. He left no children and no will, but he left a wife. He had married Nongla Bessie Comane in December 1930. It appears as though he paid **lobola** for her, because he borrowed £250 from a W J Sadler in July 1930. He was owed some money by his brother E M Braithwaite, but this was never paid into the estate because E M went insolvent. In the file which documents the winding up of John's estate, there is little concern for his wife, who is left on the farm with no income. The farm was apparently sold from beneath her and she was left homeless.³² I was able to enquire about this case from Derrick Braithwaite whose father was John William's cousin. Derrick remembers that John William was ostracised by the family. He was never invited to their house and when he arrived on one occasion, was kept standing in the rain at the front door, specifically prohibited from entering the house. After his death, the family would not allow him to be buried in the family graveyard. He had committed an unforgivable social crime (Braithwaite interview, 1992). This was not uncommon behaviour. Frank Alcock of Polela, in other ways generous and liberal, refused to greet Kenney, an assistant at the shop 'Highbury', Bulwer, because he had married an African. Frank ostracised him (Daphne Pennefather interview, 1992).

To this day, the midland community remains lily-white. This is entirely due to a vicious and rigorous process of exclusion. But skeletons do rattle around in the cupboard. Midland lore has it that there are three branches of the MacKenzie/McKenzie family - the good, the mad, and the bad. But if you happen to get talking to loose tongued midlanders, they might add a fourth branch - the black McKenzies.

Silencing

Midland families passionately collect and preserve their histories. These are found in numerous self-authored, privately published books and booklets as well as in more ambitious celebrations of local culture and history. In Charmian Coulson's *Beaulieu-on-Ilovo*, the story of Richmond and its early settlers is extolled. In the book are accounts of two McKenzie families in Richmond (Coulson, 1986, 153-160). The one family discussed is that of James and Jacoba

29 MSCE 3229/1918, Marwick to Master of Supreme Court, 12 February 1919.

30 MSCE 3229/1918, Marwick to Master of the Supreme Court, 1 April 1919.

31 Stella Varty, who grew up in Bulwer in the 1930s, confirmed that mixed race families (white father and black mother) were destitute, living in the poor (black) quarters of town (private communication).

32 MSCE 17669/1931, Estate of John William Braithwaite.

McKenzie of the farm, 'New Windsor'. Coulson tells us that they were Byrne settlers and that their offspring had varied and exciting lives. The following account is not contained in her history.

In 1880 the McKenzies brought a complaint against the resident magistrate, Arthur C Hawkins, for being unfair and biased. In his efforts to defend himself, Hawkins brought the attention of the examining officer to three cases involving the McKenzies. In the first Jacoba laid a charge of assault against her husband, John. Although she withdrew it, he was bound over to keep the peace on his own recognisances and ordered to pay £50 to his wife.³³ In the second case, Jacoba placed a charge of assault against 'Hlozi'. The matter arose when young Arthur Marwick, aged nine told 'Hlozi' not to pull a pole out of the ground. An African witness described what followed: "The defendant said 'Why does a little boy like you come to speak to me. Df (sic) then hit him on both cheeks, he hit him hard and the boy cried'". In his defence, 'Hlozi' justified his actions saying "the boy often used to swear at me". The McKenzies were outraged at the 'not guilty' finding.³⁴

The following year, the McKenzies were involved in another case, this time when the sons, James and Thomas, assaulted their father. The father withdrew his complaint and the magistrate dropped the case. He reflected philosophically, later: "I perhaps erred on the side of kindness as Mr McKenzie, the father, was black and blue from the blows inflicted by his sons when he was tied to the tree."³⁵

This was by no means the end of the contact which the McKenzies had with the law. There is a reference to another case in 1880 where the two brothers were found guilty of assaulting an African.³⁶

It is a little surprising that a record of Jacoba and James ('John' or 'Black Jack') McKenzie exists at all. This is probably accountable by reference to the fact that they settled early and their numerous offspring married prominent Richmond families like the Payns, Fletts and Comries.

CONCLUSION

The official history of the midlands is the expurgated version. The unexpurgated version omits, fashions, shapes, silences, excludes. It was only by these processes that the myth of homogenous community could be sustained. There were white people (insiders) who disrupted the neat representations preferred by midland patriarchs and matriarchs. And there were those, the products of mixed union, who fell into no clear category and were troublesome for people trying to forge a comprehensive view of the world with their own identity at the centre.³⁷ For the most part, these people were silenced, explained away and, at a later point, conveniently forgotten.

33 CSO 759, 1880/2403, Assault: Mrs McKenzie, Copy of record of case, 18 April 1879.

34 CSO 759, 1880/2403, record of the case, Jacoba McKenzie vs Hlozi, 24 April 1878.

35 CSO 759, 1880/2403, minute by magistrate Hawkins, 7 July 1880.

36 CSO 759, 1880/2403, John McKenzie to Colonial Secretary, 17 July 1880.

37 A major gap exists in the historiography of Natal-Kwazulu where 'coloured' people are concerned. In the Cape there have recently been two offerings on the construction of a 'coloured' community (Goldin, 1987, Lewis, 1987). In Natal-Kwazulu, we only have Charles Ballard's study (1985) and this is located within the context of Zulu politics and does not consider the issue of identity politics. Some indication of the contradictory position of Natal's coloureds may be gleaned from two views expressed before the *Natal Native Affairs Commission (1896-7)*. F E Foxon, bongo magistrate renowned for his support of draconian measures against errant blacks, believed that the state had been very remiss in not 'elevating' coloureds who were "good fighting men and absolutely loyal" (367). Cannon Pennington, on the other hand, believed the increase of "bastard children" was "a great danger eventually, as they would have so much sympathy with the native, and hatred of the European" (542).

Chapter 10 Conclusion

I shall end this thesis as I began it, with two quotations, this time concerning white settlers in Africa.

[T]he settlers produced little. No art, no literature, no culture, just the making of a little dominion marred only by niggers too many to exterminate (they were) parasites in paradise. (The) settler with his *sjambok*, his dog, his horse, his rickshaw, his sword, his bullet, was the true embodiment of British imperialism. (Ngugi, 1981, 29, 30, 40)

(The settlers were) an extraordinary mixture of blinkered complacency and racial prejudice on the one hand and a basic decency and friendliness on the other. (Mitchell, 1993, 20).¹

The former quotation represents, albeit in extreme form, a popular view of settlers in revisionist literature. It attributes exploitativeness, brutality, and philistinism as essential traits to settlers and can find little or nothing in settler society with which to empathize. The view is static and partial. For reasons which will have been obvious in the preceding pages, my views are much closer to those expressed in the second quotation.

Understanding settlers and the society in which they functioned, the society which they built, demands that we abandon essentialist and moralistic perspectives. I have argued that to understand their world, requires an examination of their institutions, in ways which reveal the processes which operate therein and the contradictory life experiences of settlers within those institutions. Using this approach, we can get beyond the settler stereotypes.

To develop this approach, I have accepted the view that to understand class fully, we need to understand it in its gendered (and racial) context (Messner and Sabo, 1990, 9) and have addressed the question, "What shaped the dominant or hegemonic practices of masculinity in any given society?" (Tosh, 1991, 199). Just adding masculinity to historical analysis will not necessarily render a richer, fuller understanding of history. We need to consider masculinity as an integral part of class identity, and masculinity as an integral aspect of class.

Departing from the dominant approach to South African white farmers in South African historiography, I have not given pride of place to the state.² Nor have I placed an understanding of ONF power purely on an economic seating. While both were important, I have argued that a more convincing way of exposing the basis of their power lies in examining their social institutions.

My approach was to examine a series of institutions which have often been overlooked by South African researchers, and more particularly, have failed to be integrated into the national master narrative.³ The family was the most important institution, constituting the building

1 I'd like to thank Jeremy Seekings for drawing my attention to the Ngugi reference. Ngugi is describing Kenya's white settlers. Mitchell is describing Rhodesia's settlers in his review of P Godwin and I Hancock, 'Rhodesians Never Die' - The Impact of War and Political Change on White Rhodesia c.1870-1980 (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1993).

2 In one respect, I have borrowed from Goran Therborn, who answers his own question: What does the ruling class do when it rules?, by answering: "Essentially, it reproduces the economic, political and ideological relations of its domination" (Therborn, 1978, 161). On the other hand, I reject his further argument that ruling class power is primarily to be understood in relation to its access to, operation in, and influence upon, the state.

3 The examination of midland institutions is far from complete. A particularly important omission within the present study, is the church (Davidoff and Hall, 1987). Churchmen like Colenso and Callaway were publicly prominent and influential. While the histories of both of these men are well-known, a study of the church's role as social institution is awaited.

block of settler identity and community. The ONF family was a bulwark for men and women against the isolation of rural life. It was also part of a region-wide network which channelled to its members, jobs, favours, credit, contacts and a range of less obvious material benefits. The network was also a means by which the ONFs converted themselves into an racially exclusive community.

I began this thesis with the observation that the ONFs possessed political influence and economic power. Nothing in the foregoing has upset this view.⁴ I have gone on from this point to suggest that their power was as much evident in the social sphere and was more enduring there. I have even suggested that their political influence and economic power cannot be explained without reference to the project of class construction in which they engaged. Within the midlands, the ONFs developed a cultural universe. In it they established and mobilized values, creating as they did so, a cultural hegemony throughout the region. The hegemony so established, incorporated an ongoing attachment to 'home'/England. In the context of Britain, Corrigan and Sayer explain this attachment by noting that bourgeois conditions of existence were "idealized as national character. Here, as in a hall of mirrors, requisite forms of behaviour, attitude, aspiration, feeling are held to be properly English - providing 'Englishness' with a substantial content - while their claimed Englishness is exactly what gives them their transcendental legitimacy" (Corrigan and Sayer, 1985, 195).

The social institutions were sources of power. This power could not be gauged in pounds sterling nor counted in votes nor estimated as military potential. The power was a social power, which worked ceaselessly to reproduce the class, a process which involved keeping other classes, races and groups out. In this process, settlers utilised racial identity as a communitarian cement. Whites who were prepared to meet the prescriptions of social conformity, who associated themselves with settler institutions were admitted to the fold. While many of the institutions were for men only, a balance was struck between men and women which ensured that gender tensions did not jeopardize the overall social stability of the class.

I have operated in this thesis with a dual understanding of midland community: as social achievement (the creation of a class and race community) and as mythology. In fact, the distinction is somewhat misleading. The community could not exist without its mythology. A tour today through ONF houses will invariably turn up a dusty oil painting of a grey-bearded old patriarch. These pictures are part of the ONF myth. For the owners of the pictures, the picture gives meaning to the past. It makes the past a fact. Hanging in the passage, staring sightlessly at visitors and occupants alike, it serves as proof of a particular version of the past. These pictures (and family histories and mementos) connect the ONFs to their past and affirm what they believe, that they have a special connection to a rich metropolitan heritage. Of course, there are many other family forebears who have not been immortalised in paintings, whose histories are forgotten, whose memory erased. But this is not important. The important thing is to have an ancestor (and preferably a family tree as well).⁵

Another important means by which the midland community reproduced itself, cleansed itself, policed itself, was by keeping out or casting out unwanted or would-be members. This was necessary because the settlers did not make "up an easily identifiable and discrete biological and social entity; a 'natural community' of common class interests, racial attributes, political affinities and superior culture" (Stoler, 1989, 635). The community's strict prescriptions were

4 This is not under contention: referring to prominent midland farmers, Lambert writes "These families had close links with the City and with the colonial authorities. From their ranks were drawn justices of the peace, members of parliament, and, after 1893, cabinet ministers. It was partly through their influence that the white agricultural interest was able to triumph over its African counterpart by the end of the century" (Lambert, 1989, 133).

5 For a superb account of this project on a national scale, see Corrigan and Sayer, 1985, 193.

directed primarily at black people, though persons who failed to live up to community codes on account of unmanly conduct or deviant behaviour (often deemed to emanate from the lower classes), could be excluded. Exclusion came in many forms: being cold-shouldered, ignored, silenced, disinherited.⁶

me { In trying to explain what the ONFs were and were not, I have probably over-stressed community and given a more uniform impression of their cohesion than the facts warrant. I have been aware of this tension and have tried to disrupt it by showing how individuals struggled with aspects of the gender order, how they tried to make sense of themselves as boys/men in institutional contexts that bloodied, beat and humiliated them. In defying the gender system, however, the boys/men invariably propped up settler masculinity. They could never escape their formative experiences though in adulthood they could exercise choice. To me, the life history of Alan Paton captures this dilemma or tragedy wonderfully well. He is remembered internationally for his compassion, his sense of social justice, his defiant opposition to apartheid. Yet, he was also a pupil at Maritzburg College and teacher at Ixopo High School. He was remembered at MC for his intelligence, bad temper and physical tenacity and at Ixopo for his cruelty towards students, particularly his liking for corporal punishment. In later life, although he had been exposed to and espoused far more enlightened values, he still remained intensely concerned about the physical, going on arduous walks, pushing himself to the limit. He remained a believer in strict discipline, an inflexible exponent of the virtues of corporal punishment. He was a man at odds with his sexuality, it has been suggested in a recent biography particularly in so far as it related to black women. He was also a devoted supporter of institutions, particularly the school and the family (Alexander, 1994). In Paton we find exceptional and rare qualities, as well as those which were quite common in midland men.

{ This thesis has neither emphasized nor gloried in dissidence. It has focussed on the everyday, the products of repetition and ordinariness. And, in one sense, it started with that ordinary event from which none of us is immune: the act of dying. I shall never know what my grandmother actually tried to say to me as I stood next to her frail form nearly ten years ago. But in reaching for my heart, she pricked my curiosity. In these pages maybe I have answered some of the questions which her inaudibility posed. I hope to have achieved some sense of the world from which she came, even as that world was coming to an end and she herself was leaving it.

Being unable to speak to her, I have spent many, mostly happy, hours talking to some of the old people of the midlands. I have been aware, as Jean Peneff warns, that oral testimony of this kind can yield only a particular kind of truth. "The mythical element in life stories is the pre-established framework within which individuals explain their personal history: the mental construct which, starting from the memory of individual facts which would otherwise appear incoherent and arbitrary, goes on to arrange and interpret them and so turn them into biographical events" (Peneff, 1990, 36).

Behind the stories and the idiosyncracies there are social realities which I have tried to capture. The ONFs were synonymous with a powerful rural class. I have argued that this class is best understood by examining the way it reproduced itself. The reproduction, set within institutional contexts, always contained specific race, class and gender components. These in fact can only be separated out artificially, for analytical convenience, because they were amalgamated together in settler identity.

⁶ In the Kenyan settler context, Dane Kennedy noted in awe, the "remarkable power (of settler society) to suppress dissident views" (Kennedy, 1987, 181).

The development of settler masculinity was a key aspect of settler identity as a whole. Its development was marked by strong social prescription, not for the ONFs alone, but for the settler population as a whole. In this sense, settler masculinity was hegemonic masculinity. Catherine Hall describes, in another setting, the implications of a masculinity becoming hegemonic. She writes that "the dignity, sexual identity, hierarchic and legal status of whole categories of people - black as opposed to whites, (colonial white settlers) as opposed to the English, the middle class as opposed to the working class, men as opposed to women" were affected (Hall, 1992, 288). Settler masculinity prescribed for the whole of colonial society, ordering and excluding as it did so.⁷

I have treated settler masculinity as a social and personal phenomenon. It was never static, it never included all men, or all of a man. Settler masculinity was a contradictory experience for the individual. At some time or other, all men find prescriptions about masculinity, which are themselves never totally consistent, difficult to meet. In this sense, there is never a neat fit between hegemonic masculinity and the men who carry its message. On the other hand, I have suggested, that even for those who battled 'to fit in', the experience of hegemonic masculinity could deliver moments of supreme triumph - scoring the try, enduring the beating, being elected to public office - all these acts bestowed prestige and bolstered class and gender notions of achievement, competition, manliness. But, as Mike Donaldson (1993) implicitly suggests these moments were also moments when hegemonic masculinity 'did something for men'.

At the start of this thesis I suggested that I would give some content to the concept of settler masculinity. Without having examined the period before 1880, I can but sketch the rise of settler masculinity. In a period before the colony had a settled white population, when frontier conditions effectively prevailed, the lines of gender, class and race were weakly drawn. In this period, white men lived and had children with black women, white women undertook dangerous tasks and 'lived like men'. The steady influx of settlers from Britain, the development of colonial government and law, but most importantly, the establishment of a range of settler institutions, gradually shaped a tight mould for race, class and gender appropriate behaviour.⁸ To police this, mechanisms of exclusion were developed. To ensure the integrity of this gender order, mechanisms of recognition (distinction) were equally elaborated.

Settler masculinity was disseminated through the institutions discussed in this thesis. Most prominent in this regard, were the schools, the volunteer regiments and sports organisations. The midland schools became the defining educational institutions in the colony, while the regiments and sports codes wove a vast web across the colony into which virtually every boy/man fell.

Settler masculinity was not the product of the state. Throughout this period, ONFs used the state when necessary (particularly in gaining assistance with production, transport and more complexly with labour) but sturdily defended their personal autonomy and right to make decisions without outside intervention. In the field of labour relations, the conduct of farmers towards resident farm labourers was particularly striking in its insistence on the personal dimension being retained. While this does not fit into Robert Ross's 'strongest' definition of

7 The research literature on alternative masculinities in South Africa is very small. A recent collection (Gevissier and Cameron, 1994) probes gay identity, though its historical starting point is the early 1950s. Some fascinating work is being done by Iain Edwards and Ronald Louw (1995) on gay identity in Durban in the post Second World war period.

8 Capturing this shift in the English public school system John Chandos writes that in the 1860s and 1870s new modes of orderliness and surveillance were inaugurated which produced "assemblies of clean, polite boys, uniformly dressed and, to the eye of an outsider at least, uniformly behaved, playing and worshipping at the altars of the same select games, their lives strictly regulated under the moral surveillance of a considerable body of professionally vigilant masters" (Chandos, 1984, 346).

paternalism (the acceptance of labourers as part of the family, with farmers having more than just obligations towards the labourer) (1995, 39), it does suggest that the human face of labour relations needs to be unveiled if we are better to understand the farm as a site of production.

ONF women were an integral and supportive part of settler society. At first sight this is anomalous because they were excluded "from opportunities for the accumulation of wealth on a scale usable as capital, or from career paths that would lead to the control of significant capitals" (Connell, 1987, 104) and were responsible for the children. They were further constrained because settler masculinity positioned them as ladies with social graces and organisation skills. As Jo Beall puts it, "white women were to be the symbols of the authority and superiority of the white ruling class. They were urged to maintain their purity, morality and domesticity and were discouraged from thinking or, at least, from expressing their views." (Beall, 1982, 134). Yet ONF women were not just the playthings of men - they had power and prestige from their position within the household and family where their work of social organisation was critical for the status and reproduction of the family. They were also often possessed of independent means as a result of inheritance or other transfusions of family money. For this reason, ONF women were very strongly committed to the family. To be outside the family was disastrous.⁹

By 1920 the economic and political situation had much changed. Natal was geographically much larger, having taken a large chunk of Zululand in 1897 and gained parts of the former ZAR after the South African war. It was, after 1910, part of the Union of South Africa. Economically this improved its situation. Employment and investment patterns were stabilized, property values increased, public debt and rates of taxation were held down, and damaging inter-colonial trade competition was obviated (Guest and Sellers, 1994, 3-5).

Politically, Natal lost its independence. This was traumatic for many of its white settlers: the journalist L E Neame wrote in 1929, "Politically the trouble with Natal is that it is too Natalian. Its politicians are apt to be Natalians first, Britishers second and South Africans third" (Thompson, 1990, vii).¹⁰ In government, many of the functions formerly exercised by Natal-born civil servants were taken over by bureaucrats appointed by, and obedient to, Pretoria. No longer could a good Natal name, schooling from a good Natal school and connections with good Natal clubs and sport associations automatically secure a government post or access to government aid. With Pietermaritzburg the only colonial capital deprived of any national function in the Union, it was left to Natalians to entrench their influence in the civil institutions which they had built up in the quarter century before Union. The state was an enemy to this process: not only was it now geographically centred elsewhere, but it was expanding and becoming ever more bureaucratised. Some of these institutions, like the volunteer regiments, were threatened with absorption into the unified South African defence force. These threats were vigorously and successfully resisted.

In 1920, the ONFs may have been engaged in a rearguard action, but they were still prosperous, they still had influence. Their farms and villages were vigorous centres of social interaction and their institutions were healthy and energetic. It is not so anymore. As I indicated in chapter 2, the character of the midlands is changing, the old families are leaving, breaking up. As many of the informants attest, its not like the old days. There is no sense of

9 This should not be taken as an argument that women were not oppressed. Apart from my general position, which is that all people are enmeshed in power relations and are thus at one point or another, oppressed, the specific condition of women was that of oppression. It was their dependence on family which indicated both their power, and the weakness of their position. As Sandra Lee Bartky (1988) argues, one cannot understand women as exploited by referring to a person, a thing (the patriarch). Being dominated has its origins in a system. Furthermore, it is quicksilver, appearing at one moment, disappearing in the next.

10 In 1906 Richard Jebb, an imperialist and alumnus of New College, where Milner had been a fellow, visited South Africa to promote his idea of colonial nationalism. This suited the ONFs who wanted an independent Natal, free, as they saw it, of Afrikaner domination. But the political realities were against them, and Natal's colonial nationalism was converted into a yearning separatism (Schreuder, 1988).

community. The tales I listened to thus frequently bore "an overwhelming sense of loss" (Samuel and Thompson, 1990, 8-9).

Further research needs to be conducted into post-1920 ONF history to establish quite how the midland community changed, how it accommodated itself to the new conditions, how it fared. But while we may doubt the existence of an ONF class, a midland community, there is no doubt that the project which had been so central to the ONF mission, the creation of a myth, has been an enduring success.

I can rest my case with a description taken from an August 1995 issue of the Sunday Times, titled, "Class of the Well-Heeled Jolly good show Hilton boys"

It was the social event of the colonial calendar, and they arrived in their droves from Johannesburg's northern suburbs, the Cape, Botswana and, of course, KwaZulu-Natal.

The occasion was the annual rugby shoot-out between two of South Africa's top private schools, Michaelhouse and Hilton, in the Natal Midlands.

Jaguars, top-of-the-range 4+4s and luxury German cars stood nose to nose in the tree-lined driveway, and enough wicker baskets and hampers were offloaded to keep a workshop for the blind going for a decade.

There's a whole lot more to this annual rugby fest than good old-fashioned schoolboy rivalry. The schools ranked among the most exclusive in South Africa, have always been seen to represent the upper echelons of society, a society composed of families to whom polo and rugger are a way of life. (Sunday Times Metro 20 August 1995)

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Ruth Pennington at Howick on 5 March 1992
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Ronald Louw, "The Emergence of a Black Gay Identity in Durban", First South African Colloquium on Gay and Lesbian Studies, University of Cape Town, 19-21 October, 1995

Sheila M Meintjes, "Edendale 1850-1906: A case study of rural transformation and class formation in an African Mission in Natal", PhD, University of London, 1988

R Morrell, "Rural Transformations in the Transvaal. The Middelburg District 1900-1930", MA, University of the Witwatersrand, 1983

P Naudé, "Boerdery in die Suid Afrikaanse Republiek, 1858-1899", DL, University of Pretoria, 1954

J Parle, "History, she wrote: A 1990s Reappraisal of 'Dear Louisa'", South African Historical Society Conference, Rhodes University, 1995

Hamish Paterson, "The Natal 1903 Militia Act", BA (Hons), University of Natal, Durban, 1981

Hamish Paterson, "The Military Organisation of the Colony of Natal 1881-1910", MA, University of Natal, Durban, 1985

Hilary Sapire, "African Urbanisation and Struggles against Municipal Control in Brakpan", PhD, University of the Witwatersrand, 1988

Sandra Swart, "The Nongqai", BA long essay, History Department, University of Natal, Durban, 1994

David Thomas, "The Zululand Rugby Story", mimeo, n/d

Paul Thompson, "'We are British First, and all the Time' The British civic culture of Natal, 1902-1931", South African Historical Society, Biennial Conference, Rhodes University, 1995

David Van Der Tang, "White Worker Militancy in Durban A study of Tramway Workers 1900-1933", MA, University of Natal, Durban, 1996

M R Woodburn, "Information sources, computer use and risk management in commercial farming in Natal: evidence and policy implications", MSc (Agric), University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg, 1993

J B Wright, "The dynamics of power and conflict in the Thukela-Mzimkhulu region in the late 18th and early 19th centuries: a critical reconstruction", PhD, University of Witwatersrand, 1990

D Wylie, "A T Bryant's "Inexplicable Swarm": Style in the portrayal of Shaka", South African Historical Society Conference, Rhodes University, 1995

